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FOREWORD

I AM 'Ned'. In the course of this book you will hear a great deal about 'Ned'. My absurd friend, Launcelot Nidwit, even reports long conversations that took place, usually in our club, between us.

He contrives, I am bound to say, to reproduce with an uncanny accuracy the very words I used. It is rather startling. The man must have been a human dictaphone.

I am not so conceited as to suppose, however, that my *ipsissima verba* matter greatly. The political gossip of a couple of clubmen would in the ordinary way scarcely warrant recourse to the printing press and the solemn editing I have here undertaken. And as to my (indirect) contribution to these 'Thoughts', they are the least important feature of the document.

It is *Launcelot* that deserves, or so it has appeared to me, preservation. For he was a really *rare* fool, because he was an utter and unmitigated one.

If this reminds you too much of the obituary technique of my late lamented countryman, Mr. George Moore, and so does not recommend itself to your sense of the proprieties, I am indeed sorry. But I honour Launcelot, 'after my fashion', as the most consummate imbecile I have ever encountered.

For Launcelot is dead. That you will, I assume, have guessed. And I know that I should, in consequence,

treat him with a deference which I certainly never showed to the living man.

In the presence of death I should uncover my head, and speak of Launcelot as a great patriot, as a remarkable political intelligence, as a fearless champion of the Oppressed, as a chivalrous enemy, as a loyal friend, as in the finest sense an English Gentleman.

But he was none of these things. Launcelot put Party above patriotism; he possessed as much political sagacity as a corn-crake; he regarded the Underdog as his enemy, unless he belonged to a foreign nation; as to his chivalry in combat, Money was his native weapon, and even then he would never fight until he was assured that his opponent must succumb to the overmastering weight of his Exchequer. For his friendship, that consisted of 'picking' his friends' 'brains', as he styled it, for of money he had enough so he did not require to pick their pockets; and he was a very perfect gentleman if to be that to-day you must cultivate an ungenerous, timid, sullen, boastful, sanctimonious, nagging, snobbish, purse-proud, sly disposition—if that was the sort of man Sir Philip Sidney was, then I do not think we can deny that title to our Launcelot as well.

Launcelot died a month ago to-day. His death was said to be due to 'heart failure'. This was of course absurd, for he had no heart. I happen to know the cause of his untimely demise. He died, as a fact, from an overdose of the truth. This I myself deliberately administered. I foresaw that it would kill him. For I recognized that the amount of what-was-real that his system could safely absorb was strictly limited.

My only difficulty in administering the fatal dose was to devise how it might be got into his system. This

presented almost insuperable obstacles. In a general way I found that his mind would evacuate anything that was too real almost immediately. I essayed several methods before I finally succeeded.

At last I hit upon the correct approach. I consider I was lucky. He took it at last, in a deep draught, he stiffened, he looked extremely surprised, and then he died. But up to the last moment it was touch and go.

Launcelot was a cartoon. A political cartoon, and one done by a very clever Frenchman, say in the thick of Fashoda, or say twenty-four hours after the announcement of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. He deserves to be put beside Colonel Blimp—the original of whom, as you will see, he considered he had tracked down. This is why I am salvaging him from oblivion.

At his death I found myself indicated in his last will and testament as his 'literary executor'.

You can, after what I have said, imagine I dare say my feelings upon hearing this news. My first reaction was to dismiss the matter as an unseemly joke of the defunct. On second thoughts I decided to scrutinize these preposterous 'literary remains'.

To my astonishment, I found myself more and more fascinated. Their imbecility was such as to exercise an attraction like gravitation. I became almost drunken with the gases that rose from his scribble, as I pored over it, making such desperate attempts at punctuation as the nature of the material allowed. The putrefaction of a once great and powerful society was almost present to my senses as I read on. And at length I made up my mind.

Here was a monument, I said to myself, of objectionable folly which must not be allowed to perish. I got in

touch with the publishers of the present volume. These private outpourings of a clubman, it was decided, should be edited by me and should in due course see the light. Indeed everything has been done to expedite their appearance, inasmuch as the political events which were responsible for them are still incomplete, and it is legitimate to entertain the modest hope that their publication at this moment may be salutary.

I will leave it to Launcelot to explain, in the fantastic manner proper to him, the relation that existed between us. We had been friends all our life. I thought of him as one of those offensive statues which decorate our capital. One of the first outstanding objects that had presented itself to my juvenile gaze, he would be one of the last, I did not doubt, to obtrude itself on me as I took my final leave of this bleak scene.

The Nidwits are a very old English family. They are Dutch. The first Nidwit was a certain Van Nietweet, a Flemish painter. Probably of still-life or *nature morte*. Everything doubtless was guaranteed *dead* and not likely to bite. But you could not go on saying *neet-weet* in matter-of-fact England, it would make people laugh. So this was soon cut down to Nidwit. The *van* just flew off it, as redundant, and Dutch.

Soon an East Anglian banking family came into being, made its mark, getting apparently stupider and stupider until Launcelot was born. Further than that stupidity could not go. So with Launcelot the Nidwits come to an end. (Naturally their Bank had long since been taken over by an efficient gentleman of the name of Schwartzbaum, though it still has the disarming title of Nidwit.)

Launcelot's father was General Nidwit, who collided

with a projecting piece of rock during the Boer War, was thrown from his horse on to a rattlesnake, and only escaped with the total loss of his left buttock. He was a pillar of the *Morning Post* and when he died it received a severe blow. I sometimes think that it is no longer what it used to be; seeing none of its 'pillars' are of the same robust quality as formerly, this is only to be expected.

I valued the friendship of Launcelot, since he provided me with an infallible index of British public opinion. I would read in an evening paper that the Government was 'surprised', which in the phraseology of the Law denotes restrained indignation, at Herr Hitler's silence. His Majesty's Government had addressed to him yet another offensively worded 'note', which he had so far ignored. This was intolerable! And going into my club I would meet Launcelot, looking rather menacing, and obviously struggling with a sensation of intolerable affront.

He was always in possession of inside information not vouchsafed to *Hoi Polloi*; circulating in the clubs but of too confidential a nature to be broadcast in the newspapers. These antechambers of State, the great political clubs, were 'in the know'. And Launcelot swelled as he imbibed these rumours. No Foreign Office chief could have been more secret or more sinister.

It never occurred to him that club news was no more reliable, no less deliberately tendentious, than newspaper news. To the last he balked at the obvious fact that 'the clubs' were organs of democratic rule as much as were the newspapers. That Parliament, 'the best club in London', was composed of six hundred or so listeners-in. It was not even a broadcasting station. And that, finally, even the Executive itself was only a club, after all, of old

men for the most part, comfortably lapped in dreams of the past; ruled and not ruling.

At bottom this clubman was as simple-hearted as the average man to be met with in a public house—that club of the people. Pub and club, both immemorial institutions, in England, are very near together. And they have never been so near together as they are to-day.

As to whether this is a good thing or not there are two opinions. Many are enthusiastic about the 'wisdom' of the pub. They point to the virility of the pub; and then there is the splendid *passivity* of the pub. Do great events disturb it? No. They go like water off a duck's back. It does not turn a hair. It is as if these events were no concern at all of the average man; as if in fact it were a pub in the moon.

There are many who see in this solidarity between pub and club a comforting assurance of the longevity of the latter. This all-embracing Britishness is upon an old and tried model, they believe. Yet there is perhaps a fallacy at work in this. For this antiquity is in fact spurious. Or so I suggest. *The present system is a fake antique.*

For my part I am inclined to believe that the merger in question is bad. It does not seem to me to promise great stability. And British 'stupidity' as an institution has had its day.

The conception of Democracy that must result from these conditions is furthermore an exceedingly different one from that entertained by our ancestors, who were responsible for all our characteristic institutions, among them that of Parliament. I prefer a Democracy more like a pyramid, and less like a morass.

That the club and the pub are still there, more or less,

should not deceive us, either. Westminster Abbey is still there, too. But it is not the Westminster Abbey of Bolingbroke, nor even of Mr. Gladstone. I am not contending that it *should* be. I am pointing out that it *is not*.

Mr. Eden is not Lord Palmerston; and it is to deceive ourselves to believe that Palmerstonian politics in 1937 will work out in the same satisfactory manner that they did a century ago. England is not that great State that was bequeathed to Peel and Palmerston by Pitt.

It is only a suggestion. But are we not perhaps like men withdrawn within imposing battlements that have defied the siege-trains of Masséna, but who have never heard of, or who have forgotten about, those little novelties the Dewoitine and the Junker? Is not, in other words, our famous 'conservatism' a weakness rather than a strength? Are not our pubs and clubs and our 'Talking Shops' deceptive bastions? Would it not have been better for us as a community, since things have changed so much, *inside*, were these externals with their comforting façades not quite so *palpably* there as they are? For except in the physical sense are they in fact there at all?

Because of the magical devices of science we are all more present to each other, and this merging of which I am speaking may be the natural consequence—that is undeniable. The great issues of the day boom out, in measured clubmanesque accents, from the wall of the *Crown and Scissors*. The British Broadcasting Corporation muscles in, in awful tones, from a dominating position high above the four-ale bar. This calm clubman's voice at once hypnotizes and abashes those who stand in the sawdust at the beer-splashed counters, or sit huddled over draught-games at the tables.

The club in very fact has come to the pub. Or at least

a singularly self-confident clubman, in the person of the omniscient Announcer, has got into the pub, all right, dispensing 'news' and opinion.

In his voice it is not difficult to detect that he knows a great deal more than he says. He only says what it is right and proper that *Hoi Polloi* should know. But there is a 'you can trust me!' ring about his unctuous delivery which Mr. Baldwin himself could not better. It is as if an enormously magnified Launcelot were presiding at the sacred rite of imbibing Bitter Beer.

But I must not any longer trespass upon your attention, or at least if I do so it must be clear that I am not engaging in irresponsible political *obiter dicta*. It is to introduce to you Mr. Launcelot Nidwit, and for no other purpose, that I am here at all. Let us be clear about that. Yet to effect this introduction I am compelled also to introduce myself, seeing how prominent a part I play in his self-communings.

To Launcelot I always appeared 'unbalanced'. I was a 'wild' Irishman. In spite of that, and even when he was protesting most loudly that he found what I said extremely amusing but not to be taken seriously, he adopted my views on many subjects. And they jostled in the strangest fashion with his own. My arguments, though 'brilliant' (his invariable epithet for a piece of sober common sense) were 'unconvincing' he would assure me. And he proceeded surreptitiously to be convinced. With him the preliminary to adopting some judgment of mine was to inform me that my reasoning was fallacious and my conclusion amusing but quite untrue and utterly unacceptable.

As it seems I have, in spite of myself, to say a word or two more, respecting my own political beliefs, I will

draw up the briefest statement possible. It will not of course be comprehensive. I shall confine myself to a few aspects only of my particular philosophy. It will be as if it were my official 'key' to the principles disrupting the fool's paradise of Nidwit, and finally leading to his rout and death. His stupidity had, as I saw it, assumed the proportions of an international danger of the first order. He was a danger not to himself alone but to the entire world.

STATEMENT OF A BOLSHO-TORY

Let us pension off John Bull

As to my party colours, I am a Tory-Bolshevik. 'Bolsho-Tory' let us call it. Since most, if not all, of my readers are that too, whether of the Left, the Right, or the Middle, we start without any of the discordant accompaniments of the old Two-Party System, or of one that is multi-partied.

There is one respect in which I may slightly differ from the majority of Bolsho-Tories. I am an anti-Russian Bolshie; and I am an anti-J. Bull Tory. Apart from that I am orthodox. I have one bad shortcoming, however. Internationalist fervour is definitely not my long suit. This has always prevented me from taking any active part in British politics.

The Leader of my party is of course at present Mr. Baldwin. Since we are but one great 'national' party now, of Bolsho-Tories, he stands in that relation to me just as he does to you. As Leader of the Bolsho-Tories he has done grand work. That no one can gainsay.

On all occasions I freely criticize my Leader. But that is only to show that I am not the sort of man who could ever live under a 'dictatorship'. It is, as much as anything, for the purposes of democratic propaganda that

I am so 'fearless', even so 'ruthless', a critic. My Leader would have it so, I know. It would even be *disloyal* if I comported myself as if I were living under the vile rule of some oppressive Fascist Cæsar.

If I were *not* outspoken, as a matter of fact, I should very soon become suspect.

Then let us start. Should we begin, perhaps, by making an end of John Bull? All the rest would follow. It does not matter where we start, but on the principle of 'first things first' I suggest John Bull.

You will have gathered what I mean by 'John Bull' from my observations regarding the pub and the club just now.

I should answer this question, regarding the desirability of getting rid of John Bull, promptly in the affirmative. John Bull is only a cartoon. The real John Bull is long since dead. On the fifth of November we might, with advantage, substitute John Bull for Guy Fawkes. We could burn his effigy once a year to the accompaniment of Chinese crackers. It would scare off the devils of war, maybe: the furies would remark that we were done with John Bull for good: they would think to themselves—'They must have got wise to something' and would fly away in alarm, lest we throw them on the bonfire too.

Guy Fawkes Day is typical of us at this moment. It is, to start with, ridiculous to go on with Guy Fawkes. He was quite a good guy, was Guy Fawkes, and had the right idea. He wanted to blow up the House of Commons.

John Bull is an old man of the sea. It always used to be taken for granted that John Bull only cheated other nationals with his bluff ways. We know better now. We realize at last that he always cheated *his own* countrymen

as well. Indeed that appears to have been his major function. This is *one* reason why I should vote that we scrap him. He does us no good. We are so full of affection for him and his bluff honest countenance that we do all manner of foolish things, of mad things, which he puts up to us. We can't refuse him! Really he is a danger to us; for he is a treacherous old dog.

Where (a) as a good Tory, and (b) as a good Bolshie, I part company from Mr. Baldwin

The two principal criticisms that I should level at my honoured Leader are, first, that he is by way of using John Bull overmuch in his advert-work: second, his Russophile policy I must, as a good Bolshie, take exception to. (Also as a good Tory.)

Russia is as thick as thieves with the capitalists, matters have gone much too far in that direction. (I speak as a great purist of the Bolsho-Tory school.) I would have our Leader make it clear that we are not on the side of Capital, especially of the arch-capitalists, the only ones that matter. No individual in a private station should be permitted to think in billions—to be able to pick up a telephone and wipe out a province as big as England: to decree *la pluie et le beau temps* for half a world. Even kings could not do that. As a good Tory I resent these skulking super-monarchs. (Also as a good Bolshie.) As a good *democrat* I just loathe them with a Baldwinian savagery. They look to me dashed like 'dictators'!

But here we come up against a major obstacle at once: the fact, namely, that these great 'capitalists' are *ours*. This does complicate the issue, as you will not be slow to realize. Indeed as a political problem it takes precedence of all others.

When I say that they are *ours*, I mean, of course, that they are *here*. They are as a matter of fact in our 'City'. They do not necessarily belong to us, but they are *with* us. And the good old jingo flag of Britain, the Union Jack, floats over them and confers prestige—and even more important, respectability—upon their enterprises.

'Loan-Capital' and 'Creative-Capital'

We latter-day Bolsho-Tories are not so clear-headed as a rule as might be wished. A German economist named Feder drew a valuable distinction between 'Loan-Capital' (*das Leih-Kapital*) and what he called 'Creative-Capital'. The distinction is of a very fundamental nature.

It is a distinction that the Bolsho-Tory generally neglects.

A Rothschild or a Morgan makes his money in a very different way from a Nuffield or a Ford. The former deals in money itself, as a commodity. His business is essentially that of a moneylender. He *makes* nothing. He toils not neither does he spin. But for all that he is no lily, as a rule!

The latter, on the other hand, of the Nuffield-Ford type, are 'creative' in the sense that they do at least *make* something. They certainly get too much out of life; but we have a feeling that they have worked for it: they have not merely thriven parasitically upon the labour of others.

The more simple-hearted Bolsho-Tory when he says (with an expression of suitable distaste) 'capital', in nine cases out of ten, means 'creative capital'. Generally he is thinking of some rich man of his acquaintance who has forced his way up from poverty by the strenuous production of some article which is 'creatively' useful, such

as screws and scissors, or whiskey, or camp-beds. His imagination does not habitually carry him into those more occult regions, where a half-hour suffices to pile up a fortune which it takes the more pedestrian 'creator' a lifetime to accumulate. In this respect he is at one with the pub.

That the club is more conscious of the occult forms of capital than is the pub, stands to reason. But the clubman, good easy man, generally decides that such topics are best left alone. They are not quite cricket. In fact they are at the opposite pole to cricket—he is quite right.

He of the pub, on the other hand, is totally unaware of anything more esoteric in the way of riches than that visible wealth flaunted by some enriched grocer of his acquaintance. That's what makes *him* a Bolshie.

Without 'Loan-Capital' there would be no Communism

The straight Bolshevik—say a Pollitt or a Strachey—he, though perfectly aware of the deep significance of Herr Feder's distinction, ignores it. Even, he resents its being mentioned.

As a matter of fact what Herr Feder calls a 'creative capitalist', the Russian Communist calls a 'kulak'. Even Henry Ford is only a gigantic Kulak. And of all things on earth the Marxist hates the Kulak most.

With 'Loan-Capital', on the other hand, he has many affinities. Indeed if 'Loan-Capital' were allowed to proceed on its way without interference, it would automatically result in Communism. What is Soviet Russia to-day but a vast pawnshop? It is the bodies and minds of the people that are in pawn, too.

All smaller, competitive, capital, of the 'creative'

variety, must be implacably eaten up, if no halt is called to the present credit-tyranny. Whatever you might get for being 'creative' you would not get *money*—the Financier would see to that. The whole of society would become syndicated. Except for the supreme directorate, everyone would be abject debtors. All that is creative in the world, of whatever order, from the great performer in some art, or from men like Pavlov or Faraday, down to the bootmaker or fisherman, would be enslaved by what ultimately is the politician. For Loan-Capital would melt and merge into something indistinguishable from the Soviet System.

We should all be creatures of debt. The last step would be where the State would step in and take us all over as a bankrupt stock, and work us as an Official Receiver. But the State, by that time, would be merely the handful of men who were our creditors.

An agitator has to bring his influence to bear upon the pub, rather than upon the club. Consequently 'capital' for him means *kulak*-capital. It is in that that the emotional leverage lies, when it is the pub that is your racket, rather than the club. For what the eye does not see the heart does not grieve over; and the discontented Proletarian does not *see* the super-capitalist, so does not feel so strongly where that gentleman is concerned. Whereas, of course, the clubman does get a fleeting glimpse of him.

There is another reason why a straight Communist, a Pollitt or a Strachey, dislikes on principle any reference being made to this distinction between 'Loan-Capital' and 'Creative-Capital'. That is because the really insane conditions of 'want in the midst of plenty' which prevail in every country to-day, are the handiwork of 'Loan-

Capital'. And, *without* those conditions (the criminal absurdities of which are so ably caricatured by the Bolsho-Tory cartoonist, Mr. David Low) there would be no Communism.

England as a headquarters of Loan-Capital, and how the Englishman is not the gainer

A great advance in clarity will have been effected if my foregoing remarks have made some impression. The *Bolsho*- in my Bolsho-Toryism has its muzzle trained on 'Loan-Capital'. It has no quarrel with 'Creative-Capital' as such.

And now let us return to the Russophile policy of our Leader. That is, I think, a very unfortunate policy. And I said—before I embarked upon this process of enlightenment with regard to the term 'capital'—that as a Bolsho-Tory I felt that the Soviet was altogether too thick (my expression was 'as thick as thieves') with the Capitalists. The *Bolsho* side of my Bolsho-Toryism was distinctly antagonized by noticing that.

But then what happened? A most unpleasant contretemps occurred. For I was compelled to confess that these same 'capitalists' were some of them *ours*. We got out of that difficulty—but *only in a sense*—by recalling that though *with* us they were not necessarily *of* us. For it is perfectly clear that the category of 'capitalist' with whom the Soviet Empire is so friendly is of the kind described by Herr Feder as a 'loan-capitalist'.

But have we here a syllogism? For if our Leader is agreeably disposed to Soviet Russia, and the 'loan-capitalists' are agreeably disposed to Soviet Russia, does it not follow that our Leader is agreeably disposed to the 'loan-capitalists'? I mean, of course, more agree-

ably disposed than strictly speaking he should be?

My first instinct is hotly to repudiate this. But perhaps it would be wiser to examine a little more closely what is at stake.

When I remarked that these lords of Capital, who do not seem to hate Communist Russia quite so much as you would expect, did not 'belong' to us—were *with* us but not *of* us—I meant that you cannot serve two gods. They belong to us in the sense that they are Englishmen, or some of them are; and their capital is invariably called 'British', too. But their hearts are far away and over the seas. Their spiritual home is in remote Eldorados, in some of which no British foot has ever stepped, least of all their own.

But there is more than this. Undoubtedly there are among us people who use these shores not so much as a place of residence as a jumping-off ground for operations elsewhere. They find, for the investment of loan-capital, that China, India, or Poland is a more profitable spot than Lancashire or Dorset. The Chinks, the Bengalis, the Polaks, don't have to be paid so much.

But this is very bad. For we get nothing out of these people, but they get a great deal out of us. The richer they become—and they are very few—the poorer we become. And it is mathematically certain that we shall all end up on the dole, unless we can shoo them out and slam our door.

Should the Englishman reconsider his 'Stupidity'?

I sometimes think that it is a misfortune for the Englishman of to-day that England has always been so portentously *respectable*. That respectability is an ideal cloak, that is the trouble. In this way the very honesty

of the Englishman may, in these latter days, have become dangerous to him, as well as to others. For he is the perfect decoy-duck.

If we turn from his traditional honesty, to his stupidity, we find the same thing. Mussolini's Milan mouthpiece said the other day:

'Englishmen are very stupid. They take two weeks to understand something that we Italians would see at once. . . . They even make jokes about their own stupidity.'

But is this, in 1937, a joking matter? It is quite true that we have always made merry over our adorable dullness and denseness. But we have to think of other nations who regard our denseness with growing alarm. It has such a terrible significance for them at present. It is upon what 'England' does during the next few years that civilization may depend. So it is not a laughing matter, unless we are determined to be very provoking and just as *naughty* as we can possibly be.

Our honesty, then, serves as a welcome disguise to people who are not quite so honest as we are. And the Union Jack is one of the handiest and most inexpensive of badges. Internationally, it is indispensable to the top-flight crook. It has a superlative battle-fleet behind it, a host of obliging consuls. Its uses are manifold.

Yet everywhere to-day this piece of bunting is getting to be hated. And it is the goings-on of (a) our politicians, and (b) what we call 'British Interests', which is bringing this about. How far the actions of our politicians are dictated by 'British Interests'—in contradistinction to *ours*—it is impossible to say. But the fact remains that, against all the better interests of England *itself*, much has been done of late, in the political field, to bring England

into contempt, and also to call in question its reputation for honourable dealing. As a result, in many quarters Great Britain is regarded much as was Imperial Germany before 1914. Men see it as the instrument of destructive forces, using it to achieve a type of domination not only unguessed at, but foreign to the temper of the majority of Englishmen.

However much we may with confidence assert that there is not a grain of truth in this—that, in short, we are not quite so stupid as we look—it is nevertheless not an enviable position in which to find ourselves. Just as 'Dollar Diplomacy' has blackened the good name of the American people, and made them unpopular abroad, so we have our equivalent of 'Dollar Diplomacy' and it brings with it a similar unpopularity.

The best section of our Press—and some newspapers have been particularly sensible—have not hesitated to show us, by quotations from the Continental Press, how little John Bull was liked. And if you follow to its source the cause of this alienation of foreign opinion, it can be traced, directly or indirectly, in every case, to our Russo-philic policy, and to the arbitrary and mistaken actions into which we have been led on account of it.

'Why are you English all so Red?'

'Why are you English all so Red?' the poet, Mr. Roy Campbell, who was in Toledo at the time of the first attack of the Madrid militia, was asked on all sides, for months together. What Mr. Campbell replied I do not know. He could have said: 'Because we are kept in ignorance of the true position.'

But the fact is that *we* are not Red at all. The British Broadcasting Corporation has been accused of a 'Pink'

bias, lately, with some show of reason. But its listeners—in have, or had, no Pink bias. *They* were not Pink. The Gaumont-British show nothing to the British people, in their news of the Spanish war, but the Pink, or Rosenberg, side of the picture. But the British Public would not be shocked at the sight of a 'rebel'. It would as soon see Franco's lot as the proletarian militia. Finally the British Government have been accused of bias in favour of the Communist State in process of formation in Spain. But the British Public are quite without bias. They do not care so much as the curse of a Romany tinker what regime obtains in Spain, White, Pink, Black, or all three.

In reply to these unseemly aspersions, our Government is in the habit of asserting that it will not be dragged into any 'doctrinal war', either on the side of the Communists or the Fascists. But much as I deplore, as a loyal Bolsho-Tory, to have to say it, it *has* taken sides already. By reason of its military alliance and close *entente* with France, and so, through the Franco-Soviet Pact, with Soviet Russia, and even more by its actions, and still more by its repeated failure to act, it has become a partisan.

Mr. Eden has argued, in defence of English policy, that he does not believe that, in the end, Spain will be Communist. But what *in the meanwhile* if a Communist State were set up? A Communist Dictatorship has a way of remaining longer than people expect it to. It has rather efficient methods of securing its longevity. It wipes out everyone who shows the slightest inclination to disagree with it.

Foreigners do not greatly relish these arguments of our Foreign Secretary. They regard them as insincere.

Is our Democracy properly informed by its Press, Radio, and Cinema?

I now arrive at a subject the importance of which I hardly need to underline: namely the whole question of *information*. A Democracy forms its judgments upon the information at its disposal. And no system deserves the name of a democracy, in which adequate information upon all major issues is not at least available. Lord Bryce has exhaustively examined this subject in his *Modern Democracies*. But the Radio and the Cinema did not then play the part that they do to-day. He said it was the Press that *was* the Democracy. Add to that Radio and the Cinema and you have it. What the Democracy knows, the Democracy is.

Our Government has had so much to say about the 'muzzled Press' of the dictator countries, that it cannot afford to be itself suspect on this head. It has been so successful in inflaming public opinion by pointing to the suppression of information elsewhere, that it is most undesirable that it should itself be discovered indirectly tampering with the circulation of news, of all things; whether at that fountain-head of popular information, the British Broadcasting Corporation, or in the great newspapers, in their official or 'semi-official' capacity conforming to Government policy, and to some extent acting as spokesmen of the Government.

But can we say, with our hands on our hearts, as responsible Bolsho-Tories, that during the last few years, in the field of foreign policy, the information available to the man in the street—the ordinary shareholder, as it were, in this concern—has been straightforward, unbiased, and adequate? I fear that we cannot quite claim that. I wish we could. But we cannot, quite.

Some of the more popular newspapers have provided an excellent news service. But at the fountain-head the news vouchsafed has been strangely unreal at times. It has been often tendencious, scanty, openly biased, and even at certain moments untrue. At times one could have sworn one was in a 'dictator-country'. There was that sort of feeling in the air. But with this question my friend Launcelot deals, in his inimitable fashion, so I will say no more in this place.

On the whole it can be said of the British Democracy—blandly informed that it may have to participate at any moment now in a gigantic war—that it is less well-informed, officially, than any other nation.

The British people are kept in great ignorance of the outside world. It is not only our news-service. News is doctored and distorted, so as to make our Government always seem in the right, and those nations it selects to play the part of our natural enemies always in the wrong. But there are other ways, too, in which, with consummate ability, this Island People is kept 'insular'.

Actually the Englishman is insulated in a hundred directions, from psychological contamination with the truth, or from that truth that is not *British* truth. He has not even an inkling of the fact that the Goddess Truth is not British.

The Englishman is withdrawn from contact with external reality. If *the facts* are given him, they are presented in such a way as they would be viewed by him alone: no plain unvarnished fact, no straight fact, ever reaches him. It is transmogrified *en route*.

If you ask exactly how all this is achieved, the answer is simple. It is done by fostering the Englishman's famous 'insularity': it is done by encouraging on all occasions

his famous 'conservatism'. It is far more than just letting things alone, and allowing him 'to stew in his own juice'. His juice, he is informed from morning till night, is the *best* juice. It has a flavour that no other juice possesses. If other nations only had the sense to imitate him, then they would stew in *their* juice, and we should all be much more comfortable.

It is a political programme, it is almost a clinical 'treatment'! The excuse generally made is that we are a Democracy, and that that is the only way to rule a Democracy.

The patient is cured of the ravages of truth, or truth is held at bay, by psychological manipulation. A highly *subjective* condition is induced. Subjectivity—the British brand—is praised to the skies. And all that is objective, that is to say all that is *not-self*, is never admitted to his consciousness until it has been neutralized, and stated in terms of his private mind. That a window should be thrown open somewhere, and a few currents of fresh air allowed to penetrate this stuffy atmosphere, appears to me obvious. For so much subjectivity is suffocating.

The 'Technique of escape' a clinical formula

It has been a lively sense of the danger inherent in this procedure, which has moved me to speak as I have of our Toby-jug world. If I have ventured to express the belief that our conservatism may yet be our undoing, this is my excuse. That is why I have made so bold as to advocate a reconsideration of our *Johnbullism*. For it has seemed to me that one fine day conservatism itself (of which it is regarded as the inseparable associate) may recognize it as a hideous enemy.

We are a 'backward' people. Not so backward as the

Patagonian tribes, but far more backward than, say, the Portuguese—our 'oldest allies' until this year, when they became our enemies owing to our pro-Rosenberg policy in Spain.

But we are artificially restrained from growing-up or from coming out of our shell. As an example of how this operates the recent 'Victorian' fashion may be cited. It illustrates the method employed to turn us back, and shut us in, from the impact of external reality.

The 'technique of escape' is a common way of describing this phenomenon. But is it really *we* who are so anxious to escape? Is it not rather at least in part, a 'technique' more or less consciously employed by those who govern us? Many people, admittedly, participate in this function of government. It would be ridiculous to suppose that Mr. Baldwin, or Sir Thomas Inskip, giants as they are, decree the various methods by which the public mind should be enslaved and drugged. They inherit the system, and work it in co-operation with a highly trained staff of, as it were, 'permanent' hoodwinkers.

There is, however, sufficient evidence, taken all in all, of the existence of even a *conscious* policy. Not everything can be accounted for under the head of the merely mercenary interests of purveyors of relaxation. There are far more politics even in Donald Duck or Colonel Blimp than is popularly recognized. Low and Disney govern us as truly as Mr. Baldwin.

Greenwich Time and Nazi Time

That *Johnbullism* of which I have been speaking is of the essence of this policy of democratical bulldozing. *Hitler Puts The Clock Back* is the title of one of those numerous books written to prejudice us against Ger-

many. But the clock plays an important part with us too. Hitler is not the only person who monkeys about with the clock. Our own National Clock as well stands still, or is deliberately put back. In some respects we are far more backward, as a matter of fact, than those foreign nations which are held up to us as models of anachronism.

So it is little wonder that the news with which we are supplied about events abroad is not quite so sharply defined as it should be—even sometimes so blurred that we cannot tell whether we are hearing about a hero of law and order, or a hero of disorder and misrule.

Weeks afterwards we learn, in some of our newspapers, of an event that is so important that it might alter the whole course of our national destiny. Sometimes we never hear about it at all. On account of this treatment over a considerable stretch of time, we are no longer capable of assimilating anything which is too foreign, or indeed, too real.

The exaltation of the pub—seen as a symbol of this static condition of the public mind—is part and parcel, then, of this system. Or such is my argument. And I would solicit you not to turn away with too gruff an impatience from my thesis. For if it is so much as half-true, it deserves your close and anxious attention.

'Mr. Baldwin . . . is a ruthless dictator'

As a Bolsho-Tory I am in duty bound to keep nothing back. Even if I at times offend. It is my duty to be outspoken, after the fashion of a free man. For the duty of a democrat is more arduous than we are accustomed to think. A *Tes-man* is no democrat. Debate is of the essence of a true democracy. And we get far too little of it. We get little else but periodic *ukases* from a single fountain-head

of infallible doctrine. This one-sided rule, in the Bolsho-Tory world, I would be very glad to disturb.

In the *Evening Standard* I read (it was on January 19th, 1937) as follows:

'Mr. Baldwin . . . says: "We hardly notice the freedom in England, because it is in the air we breathe." You would hardly notice it in the House of Commons either, but for a different reason—because the members leave it outside with their overcoats. Mr. Baldwin as a political philosopher delights to talk of freedom. Mr. Baldwin as Leader of the House of Commons is a ruthless dictator.'

But the House of Commons is as much a picturesque survival as is the House of Lords. It is tolerated only in so far as it remains strictly silent, and refrains from all attempt to exercise power. It is of a piece with the Constitutional Monarchy.

That this present system is from top to bottom a *fake antique*, that is first and last what I should recommend you to ponder. The illusion of security that is thereby created is wonderful. That is aimed at, and that is triumphantly achieved.

Our Leader, to start with, is in some sort a fake antique himself, be it said with all respect. Mr. Baldwin, whose great honesty we must all recognize, is in a certain way even a fake John Bull. The 'democracy' which he never tires of trumpeting is a fake too. There is no 'popular rule', let us ruefully confess it, any more than there is a 'national government' in anything but name. England is governed, as we all know, though seldom say, by a financial directorate. It is more a huge Corporation than a political State. This irresponsible Power (irresponsible since it has no official or 'constitutional' standing)

is camouflaged as a democratic parliamentary system, in which Mr. Baldwin features as a sturdy descendant of Hampden and of Pym. And the very 'dogged' tenacity displayed by the average Englishman to *conserve* what is traditionally English, makes it all the easier for this relatively occult directorate to perform its immense and somewhat amusing conjuring trick. It is thanks to the toughness of the cortex of 'conservative' England that the maggots inside are enabled quietly to gut the country, without what is going on being so much as guessed at by the majority.

If this is a true account of things—and what I have said is elementary, really, and few enlightened people would be disposed to dispute it—then some adjustments of terminology seem indicated to begin with. Even a Bolsho-Tory must attend to etymology and ask himself if he has got the right political ticket.

The original Tory, or Court, Party derived its nickname from the popish banditti of Ireland. The Irish word signified 'to pursue for the sake of plunder'. But no Tory at the present time would dare to so much as look over in the direction of Buckingham Palace, much less proclaim himself a 'King's man'. And to-day it is the Tory who is 'pursued for the sake of plunder', by the income-tax collector and a hundred other 'bandits', not the other way round.

Such terms as 'Tory', or 'Liberal', or 'Labour' are fundamentally *fake*, too, and can serve only to lead us astray. The proof, if it is needed, that these terms respond to no reality worth the name, is to be found in the bemused harmony that prevails in the House of Commons—in that 'common front' extending from Baldwin to Attlee. It is not until you reach the I.L.P. that you en-

counter serious dissent—five men out of six hundred and fifteen.

Reichstag-reaction, and the reaction of an assembly of free men

A short while ago Sir John Simon drew the attention of the British Democracy to the beautiful Calm in which the Public Order Bill was passed. Could any other country, even a democracy, have done this with such unruffled smoothness? For it was a highly controversial measure, with the great problems of Freedom bristling from every sentence of which it was composed. Yet scarcely a murmur! Scarcely a minor spasm! The perfect passage, in a perfect democracy, of a perfect bill.

And there was no one anywhere who seemed to notice that Sir John Simon was pointing his finger *not* at a picture of an irreproachable model democracy in action, but very much the reverse. He got away with it completely.

Upon reflection, can you assent if it is said that that is the way a truly popular assembly behaves? It is the very way it does *not* behave, surely. That unanimity is 'totalitarian' is it not? If I am rude forgive me. But is not this dictator-reaction, rather than the reaction of 'free men'?

It was Hitler's *Reichstag*, not the ancient Parliament of Britain, that Sir John Simon must have had in mind. A good man Sir John Simon. But in this instance he was not calling a spade a spade. He was using the wrong word. It was not *democracy*, that was not the word he wanted.

NED'S STATEMENT

II

BALDWINIAN DEMOCRACY AND PERICLEAN DEMOCRACY COMPARED

The Power-station that is Great Britain

'DEMOCRACY' was, however, the word that Sir John Simon wanted. But why should Sir John Simon have supposed that that was the correct word? The answer is simple: it was because we all pretend, and have pretended for a long while, that we inhabit a Democracy. If not a very perfect specimen of Democracy, nevertheless as a Democracy the United Kingdom must be classed, we are all agreed. If there is a Democracy anywhere, it is here, even the more cynical of us would assert.

But, in point of fact, the system of government obtaining in Great Britain cannot be brought within that classification at all. It does not belong to the class of state-forms known as 'Democracies'.

All effective political power in England is non-democratic. There is a great deal of power going about. But none of it is possessed by the people.

Much of the antiquated machinery of what once was a Democracy remains. It serves no purpose, except to take people in. It does no work. It makes us *look* like a Democracy, certainly, to the casual eye. But that is all.

In the political Power-station that is Great Britain

there are *two* machines. One is a joke. It is a large and imposing, very old, contraption, which takes up a great deal of room. (This is my 'Fake Antique'.) The other is an up-to-date one, which takes up very little room.

The latter machine functions. The former does not: it is kept there as a blind. The latter is anything but *democratic machinery*.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin, chief engineer, a pipe in his mouth, moves about apathetically in the foreground. He affects to operate the rusty throttles and archaic pistons. That is *his* function. He is part and parcel of the picturesque-historic plant. He is not an engineer at all, of course, but something like an old pro. got up to represent an engineer. The real engineers are not much in evidence.

Broadcasts from the Power-house, upon the obsolete machine

Again, in the foregoing section of this statement, I employed the expression 'free men'. Another misnomer. The very word 'freemen' takes one back to the city-state of antiquity, to the Aegean Civilization, as does indeed the word 'Democracy'. But we have merely to take down our history books, and remind ourselves of what an Athenian understood by 'democracy', or what 'free man' signified for him, to see how idle it is to apply these terms to the modern democracies of Western Europe, which have issued from the French Revolution.

When Mr. Stanley Baldwin removes his pipe, confronts the Dictators, and sternly lectures them about Democracy, he can only be doing so with his tongue in his cheek. For he must possess a smattering of history, enough to cause him to understand that his words make empty nonsense. And the Dictators fully appreciate that it is nonsense, and he knows that they know that.

This being so, it must be for *our* benefit that he stages these democratic diatribes. When he tells off Hitler, his audience is us. Hitler can only regard him as a puzzling mountebank. Or a strangely sanctimonious devil, to whom he has incessantly to hold a candle, since he unfortunately stands for England.

The 'free men' and the slaves of the first Democracies

The Greek city-state was composed of two sorts of persons: 'free men', and slaves. The proportions of these two sorts of citizen have been variously computed. But the slaves greatly outnumbered, as you might expect, the 'free men', their masters.

The free men in a Greek city-state were all White Men (as well as being *pukka sahibs*). Just like Launcelot, in fact! That is the first thing to remember about them. They belonged—like Launcelot—to a 'conquering race', as well as to a 'ruling class'.

The slaves were members of a subject race, or races. The top-dog race came from the North. The Ancient Greeks were big blonds, at the commencement. Norsemen of sorts. Consequently their skins were whiter than those of the Pelasgians and other stocks they had subjugated, or those who came to work for them.

The Hellenes were distinctly Aryan-minded

Here is a disquieting circumstance. The first 'democrats', namely those of the city-states of Greek Antiquity, like Athens or Corinth, built up the political principles extolled, if not practised, by Mr. Baldwin, upon cardinal error, indeed upon mortal sin. For in Mr. Baldwin's political religion ('political philosophy' is too mild a designation for what he professes) this is sin. The sin of pride of race.

To be a skin-snob is not exactly what we expect of a Greek. Yet those early Hellenes were a lot of Hitlerites. For they exalted *race*, in their actions if not in their words. They were the first Aryan-minded people, as they were the first Europeans. In their intolerant racial pride they were distinctly Nazi, or they would have been, had any one ventured to call in question their superiority to their slaves; or to the 'barbarians', as they called everybody not a Hellene.

All these arguments were hotly advanced by the planters of the slave-owning states, during the Civil War in America. These obnoxious palefaces, living upon black labour, which they bought and sold like chattels, asserted that they were quite as good 'democrats' as the Greeks. The Greeks, they argued, were a pretty civilized people: also pretty 'free'.

And free they unquestionably were. But by freedom they meant *their own* freedom. Nobody else's. Very practical sort of chaps, by all accounts: and so Freedom in the abstract did not concern them, as a rule.

The ancient city-state was just a big club

But as there were only a few thousand of these 'free' and privileged men in a democratic city-state, they all knew each other, they were a small group of families settled in one place. They were Bill, Dick, Ned, and Tom to each other, more or less. Just like a lot of clubmen. They were an authentic 'ruling class'.

Because they were not very numerous—these city-states were small units, unlike our enormous jellyfish 'democracies'—there was some reality about this privileged 'freedom' of theirs. They did govern *together*. All of them known to each other, they were not very easily taken in.

And their 'Hoi Poloi'—one of Launcelot's pet expressions—were ultimately their slaves. Ours, on the other hand, have been other Englishmen.

Just like a lot of clubmen! Ah, there we have it. Athens, Corinth, or Sparta was just a big English club. And the English Democracy, at one time, was just a big club, too. In the days of Major Pendennis, the English Democracy *was* a little like the Athenian. The clubmen were the 'free men'. All the rest were *Hoi Poloi*. And the Court, the Clubs and the Parliament made up a wonderfully watertight little world, democratically constituted. It was not much larger than a city-state. It was a vigorous and efficient organism.

The English 'common people' and the slaves of a city-state

The 'common people' of England were not called 'slaves', of course. The Feudal System had come to an end, though a feudal aristocracy remained and until the Repeal of the Corn Laws exercised great power.

The common people were called 'free' Britons. All Englishmen without distinction were splendid fellows on paper. Freeborn, invariably 'sturdy', terribly trustworthy and God-fearing, and 'as proud as Lucifer'. Hence the words of Rule Britannia:

'Britons never shall be slaves.'

That song was the charter of the common people. But this assertion of independence is distinctly self-conscious. They never got beyond *not* being slaves.

England insufficiently defeudalized

The common people of England were never free men in sober fact. Habeas Corpus was, as Doctor Johnson remarked, their only advantage over a Hungarian or

Spanish peasant. England was not defeudalized enough to alter this.

Even to-day it is doubtful if anything short of a social revolution can root out the obsessing 'gentleman' or 'lady' notion, for instance. The ladies and gentlemen of to-day are extremely different from those of yesterday—which is, of course, the trouble. But the English nation, considered as a family, is still divided by means of these two empty terms. This is part of the 'Fake Antique'. And to-day it is from a political standpoint a highly unsatisfactory division. Division there should be, but not of that order.

In a recent crisis a portentous outcry was heard on all sides: '*Do not let us divide the nation.*' But the nation is most inflexibly divided. And as to the rationale of that division, it is the nation at its silliest that is used to define the nature of the cleavage.

The mere forms and decorative terminology, invented as the ornaments of power, tend always to be intensified as power passes out of the hands of the class enjoying dominion. But we are long past that stage. At present, all the old tags and titles have been taken over, lock, stock and barrel, to distinguish a new intangible master-class, with an effect that is at times so laughable as to make their retention destructive of respect, rather than conducive to it.

To be born into the 'working class' is to be branded at birth

There is no country where the social barrier, remaining after the extinction of feudalism, has been so overpowering as in England. Born 'in humble circumstances', Englishmen were just as much marked men as if they had been born in a lock-up. 'It's not a sin to be poor' is an

English saying. But a sin it has been, in this 'nation of shopkeepers', unto the third and fourth generation, and a peculiarly deadly one.

An Englishman born into the 'working class' has been branded with *inferiority* from birth, as much as any slave in an antique city-state. In fact, frank serfdom, for an intelligent man, would have been preferable.

In Scotland this mystical discrimination against the Poor—the 'working class' as we innocently style it—has never existed. Where the clan-system obtains, this is perhaps necessarily absent; and the English have never enjoyed this sentiment of the blood-tie, of kinship. The 'Empire' notion, as expounded by Disraeli (putting 'Briton' in place of Englishman), has done nothing to correct this apparently innate shortcoming.

But throughout Scotland it is the same thing. A successful surgeon, say, in Edinburgh, who is a crofter's son, experiences no handicap on account of that. Whereas in Harley Street it would not help matters to have been at a Board-school. It would have been far better to have been at Marlborough. Which is proof, surely, that the Scot has not only a better heart, but a better brain, than his southern neighbour.

A racial inferior and a class inferior

I have often felt compassion for the Jew. (This was before he became so important and began taking his own part so effectively everywhere.) I have thought how bitterly unpleasant it must be to be regarded by everybody as inferior. No wonder it was a Jew, Freud, who coined the phrase 'inferiority complex'. And no wonder, too, he was not averse to fixing 'inferiority complexes' upon the Gentile world, as he has done.

We should have been wise to understand the Jew. Then we should have had no Jewish Problem. Even where he gets the better of us, it is because we have not understood him, and while resenting it, he has taken advantage of this fact.

But there are other problems, besides the Jewish. And there are other things, too, of the same order, in which we cannot afford to show a lack of understanding.

In common with other people I have felt much compassion formerly for the Jew. But I have felt even more compassion for the unfortunate Englishman born into a state of social inferiority.

The Jew has had consolations. He could remind himself that he belonged to a great historic race, which had turned the world upside down more than once, which had given it its religion; and whose 'inferiority' therefore might be regarded as a misunderstanding of the vulgar (cf. Disraeli) rather than anything innate.

But consider—let us all consider this to-day with all the powers of sympathy at our disposal—how very much more miserable it must be to belong to an inferior *class*, rather than to a *race* stigmatized as inferior on account of prejudice. Consider what it must feel like to be an Englishman, but an *inferior sort of Englishman*. To belong to the tainted and less thought-of end of a community; rather than a member of another race altogether, and so, not unnaturally, misunderstood and discriminated against.

A man of the same blood as Chaucer or Shakespeare

Can I address these words to the clubman: is it any use? I doubt it. And yet if he cannot be shaken into attention, he will pay for it. This little exercise of the ima-

gination to which I invite him, would repay him a hundredfold, if he only had the sense to see it. And he has no time to lose at all. In the words of Mr. Baldwin (or was it Mr. Bottomley?) the sands are running out.

A man of the same blood as Chaucer or Shakespeare, an intelligent, an imaginative man, if his parents have not possessed the low cunning to accumulate money, goes to the Board-school. As a child he is taught to speak in a way that will brand him for life in our English society; debar him from the comfortable jobs, make him at the start in every way *ineligible*.

He will see some *métis* preferred to him, some offspring of an asiatic bazaar-tout, merely because the former has had for a father an artist at the game of buying cheap and selling dear; and has been equipped, in consequence, with a B.B.C. accent, reserved for the well-to-do, and supplied with manners that still cause 'working-people' to address him as 'sir', in a truly ridiculous self-abasement. How galling and dreadful this must have been, to many of those so placed, yesterday: how irritating it must be to-day.

The latter reaction is politically the more dangerous by far. Oh, my fellow-clubmen, beware of that contemptuous impatience, which the merely comic dregs of Feudalism, or the aping of a feudal past by the sleekly monied, provokes.

A lesson from the 'classless' society of Germany

When a certain mannered pretentiousness took something with it—when it meant broad acres, high deeds, a mystical responsibility—that was another matter. I do not wish to inveigh against those manners that 'maketh man'. Only against the usurping of those manners by persons to whom they do not of rights belong.

That those who at present provide the illusion of 'class' should generally be of no better birth, of more symbolic birth, shall we say, than their domestics, is not only offensive to the intelligence, it is politically unsound. An anomalous position is induced, within an outwardly static society, so aristocratically coloured as ours still is.

It is the bogus fatuity of our class-machinery, which is at present the offence. The 'gentleman' or 'lady' is to-day not only an annoyance to those who, under economic compulsion, are compelled to assist at this fancy dress interregnum; he or she is a buffoon, and invites reprisals. For any of the social distinctions responding to money alone are an insult, as well as an irrelevance.

This bogus *mystique* of 'class' is, in fine, one of the things to which we should devote our attention. We should discourage it, and if possible discard it. It is one of the worst features of this system of *Fake Antique*.

The Germans in many ways remind one of the Scotch. The Scot is what we have that is most analogous to the German. And both Scot and German possess more vigour than ourselves, and, it seems to me, often greater common sense.

The snob, however, flourished exceedingly on German soil. The German snob was just as tough a customer as ours. Rather, he was just as bad a snob, and a much tougher customer. Yet the *Dritte Reich* has put him in his place. The *Herrenklub* languishes more and more. Even that inveterate enemy of all that is Nazi, the *Manchester Guardian*, has described the society in process of formation in Germany as a 'classless society'. In my humble opinion we could with advantage take a leaf out of the German book. More, it seems pretty evident that if we do not it will be done for us, in a way we shall not like.

From Herrenklub to Carlton

And so let us, by way of the *Herrenklub*, which I have just mentioned, return to 'the Club', the *leitmotiv* of all our argument.

The Club and the Public School, between them, embrace and represent all that was best yesterday and all that is most open to question to-day, in the life of England.

When England was a Democracy 'the clubs' did stand for the reality of political power; just as formerly a member of parliament counted for something. The great landed society of England, in its heyday, created these institutions: and it would have been better if the latter had passed out of the picture with the passing of that power to which they owed their birth.

For just as the streets of the capital, planned for a hansom cab age, are at present a source of unnecessary danger to Londoners; so, although the danger is not so easy to recognize—having no weekly casualty lists to bring it home to us—those expressions of a power that is no longer there are not without their peculiar menace.

The enfranchisement of the depressed classes, the break-up of the post-feudal master-class of England, the rise to social eminence of the gilded immigrant, has altered the value of everything. To-day 'the clubs' are politically negligible. The majority of their members (without knowing it) belong to the servile orders.

Baldwinian Democracy and Periclean Democracy

And here we are arrived at the point at which these two expository streams of argument converge. The Democracy of Hellas at last stands side by side with Baldwinian Democracy. The Free Man stands side by side

with the 'Gentleman'. What conclusions are we to draw from these comparisons?

The Greek civilization produced not only Democracy. It also produced the Tyrant. And the first thing that will strike us is that *our* Democracy looks much more like a Tyranny than the other thing. And Mr. Baldwin, he unquestionably looks like a Tyrant. A benevolent-looking Tyrant, to be exact.

For there are no free men. There are plenty of 'gentlemen'. But they cut no more ice than an equal number of 'cads'. There is no government by a great body of equals, all carrying some weight in the deliberations of the State.

No one ever supposed that 'the people'—all the people—governed. But it was believed that the 'ruling class' governed. And, as we have said, 'the clubs' was undoubtedly where you used to find this class in great abundance.

But to-day there is no 'ruling class'; or at least it is not the people who fill the clubs, any more than it is the members of the English Parliament who are the 'ruling class'.

We are all equally in the dark; all equally ineffective; all equally *ruled*, and not *ruling*.

If the free Athenian citizen had had no more privileges or power than one of his slaves, then Athens would have been like England is to-day. It is not the game of those who do in fact rule us to dispense with the outward shell of Power. On the contrary, all these museum-pieces have to be kept intact, and made to look as if they were in full working order, and as if legislation still originated in the same places, produced by the same men.

Formerly (as now) elections were periodically held,

and the pretence then was that all the people played their part in the act of Government. It was a *secret de Polichinelle* of course that this was a tiresome farce, and every clubman knew that it was really *he* who governed. And to-day he is still persuaded that he has *something* to do with it. He would be amazed if he knew how little he was in fact consulted or considered. He has passed over finally into the class of those who are fooled, instead of those who do the fooling.

NED'S STATEMENT
III

NED'S STATEMENT CONCLUDED

'Five months from to-night,' says Lord Milne

By common consent all issues except those of Foreign Policy have been banished from our political life. This suits everybody. Mr. Attlee likes it because *he* doesn't want to discuss Distressed Areas, or anything of that sort. Mr. Baldwin likes it, because *he* doesn't. And both are in hearty agreement that since the nationals of all other countries are more interesting than those of our own, and that only a 'Fascist' is a 'nationalist' (for Mr. Baldwin means no harm by the use of the word 'national' in *National Government* and everyone knows it) that Foreign Affairs are the only affairs worthy of a wise man's attention.

Under these circumstances I need not apologize for referring to nothing outside of Foreign Affairs. There is nothing else upon the horizon, nor will be until the world has blown up.

Then Mr. Eden, he was invented by Mr. Baldwin. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, that sprightly Left-Wing lady, has described the almost roguish arrival of Mr. Eden, a little late, tripping into the House of Commons, espied by his more punctual Leader, Mr. Baldwin. She has sketched the latter gentleman's paternal pride in the

former gentleman, and the former gentleman's filial identity with the latter gentleman may be taken for granted. So Mr. Baldwin, rather than Mr. Eden, is our Foreign Minister.

On January 12th, 1937 Mr. Eden spoke as follows:

'Some people tell us that 1938, 39, or 40 will be the year. It seems to me that 1937 will decide the destiny of the British Empire.'

If Mr. Eden tips me 1937 as the year of years, I will listen most certainly to Mr. Eden, who should know if anyone does. Or there is Field-Marshal Lord Milne (January 13th) who said: 'Your country is in danger. Some people say we have five years in which to prepare. I would feel an optimist if I said five months from to-night.'

These speeches, within twenty-four hours of each other, are good enough for me.

So it is to be this year. We have not much time, I'm afraid, to think about it. Let us try and think a little all the same. It will do us no harm, if it will do us little good.

The Tragedy of Honesty

Our fates lie in the palm of Mr. Baldwin's hand. (A few months hence it may be that Mr. Neville Chamberlain, or another, will be where Mr. Baldwin is to-day. But if so he will reap as Mr. Baldwin has sown.) We should regard ourselves as lucky. For we can *trust* him.

Mr. Baldwin is a man of great honesty. He knows this. Indeed he does not attempt to disguise the fact from others.

His slogan is: 'Honesty is the Best Policy.' And as he knows that he is honest, he argues that his policy *must* therefore be the best policy. And a very reasonable conclusion too, it would seem at first sight.

But nevertheless it is a fallacy. For two equally honest men may entertain diametrically opposite beliefs. The belief of one, if implemented, might save us from a great catastrophe. The belief of the other, held with no less sincerity, might plunge us all into a stupendous war or maniacal revolution.

Honesty is not an attribute of the intellect. It is not right or wrong, expedient or inexpedient. It is merely what, owing to his training and endowment, one man thinks.

However honest a man may be, and no man could be more honest than Mr. Baldwin, he is not free from vanity.

Luckily for us you will say; for self-esteem is nature's provision. It mounts guard over a man's dearest possession, namely his integrity. Thank goodness that honesty has this innocuous parabellum!

Once a man discovers he is honest, he is naturally very surprised. For he realizes that not many people are honest. And then he is inclined to exalt his honesty to a place which it was never intended to occupy. Here lies the danger.

He sometimes, like an over-fond husband, will attribute to his Honesty (for we must now spell it with a capital letter) qualities which it does not possess. Intelligence, for instance; judgment; and great moral qualities—though obviously Honesty can be highly immoral, exceedingly stupid, and utterly devoid of judgment.

Should he get too obsessed with his Honesty, it may lead him into strange paths. If he is a public man, it may lead others too. He will defend it tooth and nail. He will hang, draw and quarter the man, if he can, who so much as questions its authority in all matters.

Meanwhile less scrupulous people will insinuate them-

selves into the good graces of his Honesty, as they might into the good graces of a wife. They will court it. They will *corrupt* it—if it is possible to say that about Honesty.

If it is a stupid Honesty, it will, inevitably, grow stupider under these circumstances. If questioned, or attacked, by its victims, it will grow peevish and revengeful. In the end it may even become a virago, a scold, and a *mauvaise langue*.

Furthermore, Honesty, like other things, is subject to the law of change. Honesty evolves. It is capable of development. So as it listens to its flatterers it will modify its opinions. And if they are dishonest flatterers, and, as we know, most flatterers are that, the oddest contradictions may ensue.

It is no exaggeration to say that Honesty may become a positive scourge, in a family circle, or in an entire nation. Under certain conditions, there can be no uglier thing alive than incarnate Honesty.

This does not apply to our Prime Minister. But his Honesty *has* a certain, not too reassuring, squint. It has had to fight for its reputation so much and so hard that it has a somewhat battered and aggressive appearance that is at times a little disquieting. This is tragic when you come to think of it. For it must have been as sweet and shy as a violet, half-hidden from the eye, once upon a time. Mr. Baldwin's Honesty is still beautiful. But it is *des beau restes*, rather, that we have with us, a little hard and artificial-looking. Is it possible that even Honesty ages? we sigh as we consider it, a little askance.

Mr. Baldwin and Lord Byron

Baldwin is like Lord Byron. He is near man's allotted

span, as he has several times reminded us. So he cannot 'die young'. But I think he would like to die *for Liberty* all the same. And if he has chosen the Rhine rather than the 'Aetolian Shore', poor old Germany, squeezed dry as an orange, rather than lovely Hellas, his intentions are none the less Byronic and beautiful.

Many, however, will have to die with him. That is the snag. That is why I am drawing attention to it. Of these, great numbers are very young, even younger than Byron was. And singular as it may at first sight appear, so greatly have times changed (Mr. Baldwin has not noticed it) these young persons have no desire whatever to 'die young', like Lord Byron; and they are strangely enough sceptical about Liberty. They have seen too much of it. I suppose, that is what it is.

Some of these young sceptics with whom I have spoken wish that Mr. Baldwin had really done the thing properly: not waited until he was so old that he is apt to die in any case, before making this gesture for Liberty. They might have been spared this vexatious quandary.

The Lord Byron in Mr. Baldwin is alas short-sighted

Now Liberty is one of the jolliest words I know. And it is one of the jolliest things I know. I am mad about Liberty. But a word is after all only a ticket. And often it gets stuck on to the wrong object. Worse than that, often it gets pinned on to something that is its opposite. This sort of inattentiveness is one of the things we have to be careful about.

Mr. Baldwin, I believe, is such an honest man that he is awfully easily taken in. When he sees the word *Liberty* pinned on to something he is sure it must be all right. The Lord Byron in him hot-bloodedly asserts itself.

He would *die* for this wrongly ticketed object on the spot.

So we must see that things are properly marked. This is not so much because we mind losing *him*, though we should hate to do so. But we are all made up in a parcel together. He is our 'P.M.'. When he does the Byron trick we have to do it too.

For instance, Mr. Baldwin, being an honest man, has never quite liked the Soviets. They had a bad name—a spot of homicide was attributed to them. But Time is the great healer. Mr. Baldwin is not going to sit down and think about Russian Refugees for the rest of his life. Other refugees have a prior claim on his attention, since they are of more recent date. Then he cannot get away from the word Liberty pasted over all their doings. There must be *something* beautiful there, seeing that that beautiful word is always stuck on everything that comes from the U.S.S.R. So without exactly falling for them (there was that little 'purge' or two recently remember) he has reached a very 'open mind' indeed where the Soviets are concerned, which of course has its physical equivalent in an open purse.

Do the British Government secretly desire a Franco victory?

The British Government entered upon the Spanish War in a somewhat chastened spirit, after the Abyssinian War. (No wonder! And thank God.)

French and British 'volunteers' predominate over all the other nationals composing the International army defending Communism upon Spanish soil. But the French outnumber many times the British. And to Moscow's indignant SOS to save the Soviet Idea in Western Europe, the British Government has responded,

on the whole, half-heartedly. Its heart is not in this Spanish business quite the same way that it was in the Abyssinian business.

This reluctance to come out too openly upon the side of a Marxian hegemony, for fear of once more being confronted with the grim alternative of either going to war, or else looking foolish, has been sufficiently marked to lend itself to misunderstandings.

Sir Stafford Cripps referred in a speech to 'the crooked dealings of the British Government in the Spanish tragedy'. And he went on to say: 'This last effort to assist Franco, this banning of volunteers from Great Britain . . . surely that must be the last straw to break the back of British tolerance. We must make the British workers realize how deep is the betrayal of democracy by this Government.'

That is, of course, a little 'crookedness' merely on the part of Sir Stafford Cripps. For this gentleman is perfectly aware that to represent the Government of Baldwin-Eden as a bunch of 'Fascists', straining every nerve to secure the victory of General Franco, is a pleasantry no more. But he is addressing himself to very simple people, as ill-informed by the Left Wing Press as others are by their Right Wing, or Centre, Press.

The German Press, as well, indulges in a mild deception of the same order, for the benefit of its readers. It follows in the footsteps of Cripps and the rest of the Left Wing propagandists, and represents the British Government as secretly backing Franco, while pretending to back the Soviet.

'The attack of the Comintern led to the formation of a defensive front whose leaders are Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. England disapproves in theory of the

defensive front and its view-point, but is in practice very happy that the defensive front is there, and that through its existence Bolshevism is, for example, prevented from extending its aggression in India and even in England itself. It is unfair for a country to let others fight for it; it is still more unfair, then, to disavow its champions.'

To suppose that Messrs. Baldwin and Eden wish to be protected against Communism is, alas, very far from the truth. Would that they did! They have in fact gone in with Communism, in order that Communism should protect them against Fascism.

But that they do not wish to be *too* enthusiastically protected against Fascism, especially until they have enough bombs and things to protect *themselves* (should Communism prove less effective than is hoped) is probably correct. And the protection that is being afforded them in Spain by their Soviet champion is, like all things Sovietic, a little too thorough. Above all, it is too *open*. There is an embarrassing lack of decorum about all the Soviet does.

These people cannot and will not learn to be discreet! They shout from the house-tops, where a gentleman would observe a little sensible stealth.

Better Communism than Castor Oil

It is now clear that in no European country can Democracy defend *itself*, in domestic politics, against Fascism, without the aid of Communism. Nor in most, of course, can Communism succeed without the help of Democracy. Hence the 'Popular Fronts'.

As Democracy becomes hard pressed, it will have everywhere, sooner or later, to hand over effective power to militant Communism. This was the case in Spain, and

may to-morrow be the case in France, or elsewhere.

Here in England we have had an example of Democracy 'protecting' Communism—against Sir Oswald Mosley. As the latter's influence increased, especially in certain metropolitan districts, something had to be done about it, it was felt. One good turn deserves another: and if Communism 'protects' so-called democracies in one part of the world, so-called democracies must 'protect' Communism where it looks as if it might be worsted.

If an enquiring democrat were to ask: 'But if you hand over the keys of the fort to the Communist, when he has killed all the Fascists will he not perhaps declare that possession is nine points of the law and say "*J'y suis, j'y reste!*"?' Messrs. Baldwin and Eden would look at each other and then reply in chorus: 'Better that than Castor Oil!'

'The Democracies are nothing more than centres of infection for Bolshevism'

Mussolini is very rude about Democracy. I think he always forgets that it is not Democracy that he is talking about, not about societies of free men, but of peoples far advanced into that depraved condition called by Mr. Belloc 'the Servile State'. But let us listen to him, so that we may hear the other side, and realize how disrespectful this Dago Emperor comports himself. The *Blum-Baldwin Axis* is for him a sickly plant. He does not conceal his contempt for it.

'Much has happened in this year,' said the *Duce* to the German journalist. 'We have made a big stride forward. We have forged the *Berlin-Rome Axis*.'

This son of a blacksmith was here referring to the

mighty alliance of these two terrible States, Italy and Germany, founded on force. Not like the British Empire on gentle persuasion, or like the Soviet on peace and goodwill. But this brigand as Mr. Israel Gunther calls him continued:

'We are experiencing a change of epoch, a total break-up of political and social ideologies. The democracies are done for. They are to-day, consciously or unconsciously, nothing more than centres of infection, carriers of bacilli, and handymen for Bolshevism. That is the one group. We are the other.'

You will observe how this man, who is described as a great 'realist' (when we can for a moment forget his crimes), lumps Messrs. Baldwin and Blum with the Russian Soviet.

The Franco-Russian Pact, and the Franco-British Pact, make it, of course, a little difficult to give him the lie off-hand. But one cannot but exclaim, when one hears such remarks: 'What is the use of Mr. Eden proclaiming that there is *one* thing we will not stand for, and that is a division of the world into opposing *blocs* or groups, if people like Mussolini next minute assert that we *are* a group already, we British; that by our policies, our political alignments, and the utterances of our statesmen, we have formed ourselves into a *bloc*? An "anti-Fascist" *bloc*.'

Imaginary Conversation between Mr. Eden and Mussolini

This *bloc* argument is of great importance. For I think if you *thoroughly* understood all that it involved, you would understand everything about contemporary European politics.

With your leave I will dwell for a moment on this

question of *blocs*. And with the object of bringing out the salient points at issue, I will introduce here an imaginary dialogue between our Foreign Secretary and Mussolini.

Of course we know, however much others may choose to ignore it, that the *bloc* of nations we have been so busy building up into a great confederacy, is the first step towards a League of Nations. A league of *all* nations. If half of the nations have not joined us that is not our fault.

When it is contended, with an ironical smile, by Signor Mussolini, that *we* were the first *bloc*-makers, and that it is therefore insincere of us to pretend that we do not like *blocs*, we must remind him of how we came to make a *bloc*, in the first instance. Mr. Anthony Eden would do this without doubt.

But Mussolini would only reply, as is the way with such cynics and sceptics:

'Yes, you have built up your aggressive, "peace-loving" *bloc*, with France and Soviet Russia, and now you say you refuse to recognize any other *bloc*. That your *bloc* must be the only *bloc*. That is all very well, but supposing other nations do not believe they would get a square deal inside your *bloc*, as at present constituted? Supposing they take strong exception to the inclusion in *any bloc* of a Power which openly proclaims its intention of attacking the internal order of all other States? What then?'

'You refer I suppose to Russia,' Mr. Eden would probably reply. 'That is your bogymen.'

'Just, my dear sir, as "Fascism" is your bogymen! Also, of course, the bogymen of all good little Marxists.'

'We cannot have any black-balling in our new club, Musso,' our Foreign Secretary might say, if he descended to jocularity. 'No discrimination! That is our watchword!'

'We are glad to learn that you are incapable of discrimination; that is novel, but believe me very welcome.' And we may suppose that Mussolini would here give him a rather hard look—remembering Sanctions, and how, if a less resolute man, he would still be without any colony worth the name, or perhaps in his grave. 'But listen while I put it to you pretty straight. Your *bloc* is already armed to the teeth. Is it not? In spite of your "peace-loving" professions you adopt a hectoring and blackmailing tone towards all those States which have not agreed—on your terms—to join your *bloc*. Is it not natural that other States should feel somewhat alarmed? Why, the pacifists within your gates would be alone sufficient to send into a cold sweat the ruler of any country which had displeased them, if his nerves were not of the best! No. You are really too absurdly insincere when you announce that you refuse to belong to any *bloc*. You *do* belong to a *bloc*. You are a *bloc*. And you know it. Why waste words?'

Thus Mussolini. And what would our Foreign Secretary reply to that? He would say that he could not admit that any friend of his was not *comme il faut*. If the Soviet were good enough for him they were good enough for such blackguards as ruled the dictator-countries. For our man wouldn't mince his words, if this Italian adventurer got tough.

But Mussolini, with that ungentelemanly turn for logic which is so pronounced a trait in those of the Latin races, would only laugh.

'Dictator-countries!' he would guffaw. 'Have you really forgotten that your Russian friends belong to a "dictator-country" too? That Soviet Russia in fact was the first "dictator-country".'

Thereupon we can only suppose that Mr. Eden would

point out to him that there was dictatorship *and* dictatorship—good and bad, Red and Black. And that he, for his part, only used the term 'dictatorship' when what was dictated was a doctrine of which he disapproved.

'Then you admit bias?' Mussolini smilingly would ask. 'You always say you take no sides in the Communist-Fascist dispute, and that it is no concern of yours what form of government a country adopts.'

'Or has had imposed upon it!' Mr. Eden might smartly rejoin.

'Oh but!' Mussolini, laughing as usual, would cry out, to make it seem to anyone looking on that our Foreign Secretary was a disingenuous simpleton. 'Did the Communist Party seize Russia, or was it Russia that seized the Communist Party?'

Mr. Eden would of course point out that the Communist Revolution was 'a spontaneous uprising of the people'.

At this Mussolini would grin very broadly indeed as if it were a very good joke of Mr. Eden's. Then he perhaps would take on a more serious aspect, and he would deliver himself as follows, and Mr. Eden would sit in front of him sucking at a pipe, a pipe of indivisible peace.

'Listen sir, before you go, to these very serious words I have to say to you. Amongst nations as amongst individual men democracy is a very praiseworthy thing. If the League of Nations, or your present *bloc* which has taken its place, had been a truly democratic institution it might have appealed to Italians and to Germans more than it has. We neither of us relish the idea, however, of belonging to a sham parliament-of-the-nations. "Cabinet-rule" in fact obtains, whatever the democratic and egalitarian professions may be of *vous autres*, the "democratic states-

men". And that we do not like. A veiled Franco-Russo-British dictatorship is all we should get. Hence the "dictatorships" we have set up at home, to side-step if we can that more noxious dictatorship at Geneva or elsewhere. We do not care to give up, as Mr. Attlee suggests we should, such a tiresome toy as "national sovereignty".

Mr. Eden would here probably confine himself to replying that he could not accept Signor Mussolini's view of Geneva. Mussolini would smile (not at all disarmingly) and then proceed:

'We are poor nations, outside the international ring of big Finance. We are the *Have-nots* as it has been called. We are better democrats than you.'

'Are you democrats?' Mr. Eden might enquire, lifting his eyebrows. 'Of that I was not aware.'

'There are many things, sir, of which you are not aware,' the Duce would doubtless retort. 'Now in conclusion, you make this demand on us. You ask us to do one of two things: either (1) to join your *bloc*; or (2) to remain outside it without forming an opposition *bloc*. But this is very arbitrary on your part. We might consider joining your *bloc*, except for one thing. Soviet Imperialism is the most up-to-date sort of imperialism and it is a sort of imperialism of which we very profoundly disapprove. The Government of Soviet Russia wishes to turn us into colonies. The same way exactly that England turned India or Australia into a colony. For when England seized India and Australia, the Hindus and the Black Boys were informed that England was bringing them the Word of God. It was for their good that English administrators had been sent to govern them.'

Mr. Eden might have observed that the Abyssinians had heard something too of the advantages of Italian civiliza-

tion. But Mussolini would have his answer ready, who can doubt.

'Yes,' he would say, '*civilization* we should claim to have brought to Ethiopia. We should talk not like salvationists, but like civilized men. But let me return to the two sorts of Imperialism I was describing to you. What difference is there between British Imperialism and Soviet Imperialism after all? Both aim at political domination, both have been accompanied by salvationist fervour, Christian missionaries and Communist missionaries are not so dissimilar. But no, there *is* one most notable difference between the British Empire Builder and the Soviet Empire Builder, very much to the advantage of the former. The former only directed his attentions to "coloured" and "backward" peoples. He at least never had the effrontery to pretend that he should take over the government of a European State. He at least recognized himself as a part of Christendom. But the latter-day up-to-date imperialist, beneath the Sickie banner of the Prophet Marx, makes no distinction between a European State and a Frontier Tribe. That is perhaps because after all he is not himself a European. Every country, without any exception, is for him fair game. But Italians do not desire to see him on Italian soil. That is why I am where I am. We do not want to be a colony of the Comintern. This is our last word Mr. Eden. If you insist on forcing this new friend of yours upon us, we shall not join your *bloc*. And let me inform you as a member of a civilization that is far older than your own, that if you persevere in your Russophile diplomacy, you will not only alienate half the world, but your country will end as a humble colony of that newfangled Marxian Empire, which you do not seem

to have got the hang of yet. Forgive me—I have a date with one of my “dictator” pals. I must be off. But you have some business engagement too, I should not be surprised, with one of *your* “dictator” friends. Tell him all I said. And remember me to Old Sealed Lips! A rediverlo, Signori!’

‘Only a great war can bring Communism to England’

The Spanish Revolution has failed. Whatever efforts Messrs. Eden and Blum may make to save the face of Marxist power, and to save a *little* of Spain for the Red Principle, it will make no difference. *Le coup a raté*. The Revolution has not come off.

This is a fact of the utmost importance for Europe. And it is not made any the less significant by the wide advertisement that was given to it beforehand by the Comintern.

Everywhere Communists were hissing and shouting: ‘Look what we are going to do!’ And they have not been able to do it. ‘Spain shall be the Russia of the West!’ they clamoured. Whatever may happen to Spain, it is not to become after all a land fit for little Lenins to live in!

And yet Spain was their best bet. A very backward country; absentee landlords of a truly detestable egotism and laziness; a violent and unruly mob in the great cities.

There is another fact beside which this fact must be placed. Nowhere in Western Europe has Communism succeeded. In Italy it almost came off. But Mussolini beat it down. In Hungary and Bavaria it got the upper hand for a while. But it was counter-attacked and stamped out.

Reflecting no doubt upon these many misadventures of the International idea, Mr. Cummings of the *News Chronicle* has remarked that only a great war can bring Communism to England. That is surely one good reason for not having a great war. Or rather, it is a good reason for all who are not fanatical ‘Lefties’.

Now it is a similar line of argument that is generally employed to justify the Russophile policy of the present Government. It is because Communism is not a danger here that we can afford to compact with that great State where Communism *has* succeeded.

Mr. Baldwin snaps his fingers in the House of Commons, and says there is not *that* much Communism in this country. He is quite lighthearted about Communism, and Fascism too (though his actions belie the latter assertion).

Mr. Baldwin is of course quite correct, if by ‘communism’ you mean full-fledged membership of the Communist Party.

Because Great Britain is so free from Communism, at the moment, Communism is therefore of no importance. That is the argument. When other countries say Communism matters, Mr. Baldwin pooh-poohs these sensation-mongers; who, in any case, we are informed, are only saying that in order to justify their rearmament, and to arrogate to themselves the position of defenders of the European order. It is sensational: also it is deliberately untrue. Communism can and should be ignored.

Furthermore, if these countries who do not like Communism persist in their refusal to join the Anglo-Franco-Soviet Pact, and insist upon arming themselves on the pretext that the Russian Army (which is one of the two largest and best equipped in the world) might be used for war, then, it seems, Mr. Baldwin is prepared to go to

war (or to allow himself to be dragged into a war) against those countries—to stop them from having arms, and to stop them from talking about Communism as if it were important.

Mr. Eden has laid it down that Germany will be allowed armaments sufficient for defence, no more (January 19th). But he did not specify what quantity of arms would be regarded by Great Britain as adequate for the purposes of defeating the combined armies of Russia and France. Nor did he say whether he considered Russia was yet sufficiently armed for the purposes of Soviet defence, though I think we were intended to conclude that such countries as Russia *could* not have too many arms.

But if Mr. Baldwin accepts the principle of Great Britain participating in another war, this would be a 'great war'. And that would be very likely to lead to Communism in this country, as the *News Chronicle* has justly observed. For there would be no Mr. Baldwin in England after a great war which he had been instrumental in producing.

Under these circumstances there are a few things that immediately strike the observer. First, would it not be better perhaps to allow these countries who do not like Communism to go on disliking it? And, since *without* a war you cannot stop them from arming heavily in self-defence (heavily because their antagonists are very heavily armed indeed), would it not be better to let them arm, and to arm yourself if you want to?

The English people, if attacked, would make better soldiers than if asked to go and attack other people, however much those other people may object to Communism. And seeing the openly admitted hatred of

Germany expressed by the groups in control both of Russia and France, it is plainly unfair to ask Germany to remain in a position of military inferiority to the combined military might of those two great empires.

After a great war, what is more, Europe would be at the mercy of the victors. And if the victors were France and Russia, we too should be at the mercy of the victors. For Great Britain has less than nothing to gain from such a war. There are no more German colonies to seize: there is no German export trade to bag: there is no German Fleet to destroy. There is only Hitler's skin.

Germany, cut up into small States, as Austria-Hungary was, would be out of it. Or rather Germany would be a nest of Communist (or at first of Popular Front) Republics, not very friendly to Great Britain, whoever else they might learn to love. So whatever happened to poor old England, it would find itself isolated, unless it adhered to the Marxist *bloc*, as a proper Marxist State. As a Fascist State, and it might become that, it would be Public Enemy No. 1. And as to 'Democracy', we should never hear anything about *that* again.

Mr. Attlee says Empires are 'toys'. Yes, but the small English-speaking nations of which the British Empire is composed, submerged by hordes from Europe after a great war, probably would then prefer that Mr. Baldwin had left things alone and not been so ready to enter upon a war. Even a little mild expansion to the North-East for Nazi Germany would have been preferable to what would ensue upon a successful issue to a Franco-Russian attack on Hitler.

It is unnecessary to consider the other alternative—namely a war in which the 'Popular Front' of Britain,

France, and Russia was defeated. That would have undesirable consequences too.

I say all this not in a cavilling spirit, but only to state a point of view which is not often heard, since all that is articulate is Left Wing or embryo 'Popular Front'. There *is* another point of view. That is all I wish to sustain. If I did not let my Leader hear it, he would quite likely say that, as *everybody* who had a tongue in his head was in favour of a Popular Front War (as it was the only hope for Communism), he thought it was all right. In any case, he had to agree to war to win the next election.

The clubman's Machiavellian delusions

Let me at this point return to the clubman. For we draw near to the time when I must hand over to Launcelot. For the clubman politics are of course a game, like football or like cricket. It is a game at which he thinks he is very good. But it is my ungrateful task, in my capacity of the disaffected clubman, to enter a caveat: to suggest that he is liable to be caught in his own trap. For the Communist by whom he is being hunted is a tiger, or at all events a very formidable wild cat. He is not a badger or a fox. And the habits of mind which were appropriate to the fox-hunting fields of Old England, are not suited to the asiatic jungle in which we all find ourselves to-day.

It is a melancholy fact that almost any policy of the Government can be justified to the clubman, however paradoxical it may be, by assuring him, in a confidential tone, that it is a political ruse merely. You may have smiled when I said just now that a war could be justified, as a means to the one supreme end of all politicians,

namely to win an election. But that was not at all too fantastic.

The danger for the clubman lies in precisely this habit of the inveterate sportsman's mind. Everything becomes unreal at once, in this bland deliquium of playboy values. Besides, he is very easy to manage, as a consequence of his readiness to believe that, however much Labour may be betrayed by its leaders, *his* leaders, being gentlemen, will never betray *him*. They will indeed carry his interests invariably next their hearts. There's nothing you cannot do to him, but he will believe that it is a subtle way you have thought up of downing the other fellow—namely the Socialist.

This dangerous delusion of the clubman is one of the keys to English political life. The 'clubman' indeed is a figure which stands in the same relation to the English ethos as Don Quixote does to that of Spain. It is the old story of 'dishing the Whigs'. All true clubmen loathed Disraeli. He was a sly, vitriolic, unscrupulous outsider, upon whom no dependence could be placed. Yet the Tory put his life in this outsider's hands. Why? *Because he could 'dish the Whigs'.*

What this meant was that (being a sharp low fellow) Disraeli had an uncanny knack of discomfiting the Whigs, those would-be oligarchs, that clever crowd who could make rings round the White Hopes of the 'stupid party', as the Tories were called. He had a marvellous knack, had this 'superlative Hebrew conjuror', of making all that was most illiberal look as if it were an exalted humanitarian crusade. So the services of this political bravo *must* be secured. He must be given anything he wanted—provided he went on 'dishing the Whigs'.

Now Mr. Baldwin outwardly is as disarming as Disraeli

was calculated to awaken distrust. You can see his honesty a mile off. He is not clever or anything objectionable of that sort. But he has done many things that his Party do not much like.

Mr. Baldwin has, however, always been able to account for his most unorthodox and unsuitable actions, on the ground that he was beating the Socialists at their own game.

How far it is possible to go on this slippery path has been proved by Mr. Baldwin's spectacular success. Even a diehard Tory knows that he has no chance of putting across a true diehard policy. He must compromise. It is only a question of *how much*. About this there is much disagreement.

Whether Mr. Baldwin, for instance, would be able to turn England into a Popular Front Republic overnight, on the plea that that was really a very shrewd move and was cutting the ground absolutely and *once and for all* from under the feet of the Socialists, I do not know. I believe he could. But I think that in the realm of foreign affairs there is practically nothing he cannot do, on the plea that if he did not do it the Socialists would get in.

On their side the Socialists are very well satisfied with the arrangement. As they are as much committed to Internationalism as is Mr. Baldwin, they do not desire power. Power would indeed be a complication, at the present moment. They would much prefer that Mr. Baldwin should make war than that they should have to do it. This is understandable. For war is not a thing that goes well with Socialism. On his side Mr. Baldwin can always say that he only did it because the Socialists insisted. A good sound arrangement!

About the Foreign Policy of the Government the clubman is obviously none too comfortable. He is not even anti-German. He understands nothing about Russia, but he suspects that there are a lot of Bolshies still there.

Dimly he sees that it is all Popular Front politics that Mr. Baldwin deals in—if it is not straight 'Bolshie' politics. On the other hand the F.O. are a lot of deep dogs and they know what they are about, he expects. They are probably at their old games. They are probably outwitting—making use, for their own machiavellian ends, of the Popular Front and Communist Governments of the Continental nations, just as in the domestic field Mr. Baldwin outwits the Socialists every time. ('What a clever old devil he is!' says Harry to Dick, as they glance through one of his more sturdily edifying speeches.)

This is the clubman's machiavellian delusion. It is the child of his conceit, I am afraid. It is the nemesis of being too clever by half. It is the heritage of a political technique which is to-day antiquated, and which responds in no way to the terrible realities of the situation. It is one of the most dangerous things in English life.

A Spanish Lesson

If the Spanish Revolution has failed—in the sense that as a political work of art either a revolution comes off or it doesn't, and this one hasn't—the Spanish people, nevertheless, where the Marxists could get their fingers on them, have not been spared every physical horror that can be devised by man.

These terrible events might almost have been ordained to enlighten us. But they have not done so. In the first place we have refused point-blank to look, or at least our

Government have. The presence of international armies in Spain was known to the whole of Europe, at a time when the British Public had never heard of them. When at last its attention was drawn to this fact in enormous headlines, it was represented as yet another *coup* of Mr. Hitler's, as if Germany *alone* had been sending men to Spain.

When Mr. Eden got suddenly busy about 'volunteers', he made no mention of France. Notes were despatched post-haste to the capitals of the Fascist Powers and Russia, but no Note went to Paris. Yet France has assisted the Spanish Popular Front as much as has Russia and more than the Fascist countries.

But one thing at least has become clear. Terribly clear. It is that there is nothing in Heaven or Earth that will move our Government from its settled policy. There is nothing that Russia or France, the Comintern or the Popular Front could do, which will make the slightest difference, in Spain or anywhere else. We shall just pretend we haven't noticed. Our Government's equanimity will prove unshakeable.

Is this a sign of great strength? It is a sign of something. And that something is of most unusual potency.

For us, the men-in-the-street, and yes, the clubmen, of England, the lesson Spain has to teach is this. It is not about Spain. It is about *us*, or rather those who rule us. This was a test, if ever there was one. And it has brought out *something*, that it is worth our while to ponder.

So let us forget about Spain altogether. Let us concentrate our attention upon this Government, which nothing will move from some unavowed but most implacable purpose.

But a Government, with an 'implacable' purpose! That is

surely an absurdity? Governments are not made that way.

Well, it appears they *are*. Or we've got one like that, anyhow.

Here is, if we are to judge from the teaching of recent events, a purpose so exclusive as to override everything, an issue that is regarded as of such overwhelming importance that our masters are deaf to all the dictates of humanity or ordinary self-interest. So much importance, it would appear, is attached to *this* alliance, that nothing the ally, or allies, in question can do makes any difference.

And yet one of these allies is not a very desirable one, to say the least of it. The more this is pointed out, however, by Italians, Germans and others, the more obstinate our Government becomes. Even, the more the ally in question misbehaves itself, the more unaccountably we cleave to this black-sheep, or rather this butcher.

Here is a diplomatic mystery of the first water. Rarely are Governments purposeful. Their purposes are generally infirm. But we have a Government impressed with the superlative importance of something or other. It gives them almost an air of strength.

Hitler

Last but not least I come to Hitler. In a political game of *Cherchez la femme* you will always find that *la femme* is Herr Hitler. At the bottom of everything is this portentous housepainter, who has become the trusted Leader of the German Nation.

There is very little question that those who direct the Foreign Policy of Great Britain suffer from a Hitler complex. They cannot open their mouths without referring to him, generally in fairly disobliging terms. This they vary with 'appeals'. These 'appeals' all seem to be

directed to the same end, namely to put Germany in the wrong. 'To place Germany in the Dock', the Berlin papers call it.

Germany is the arch trouble-maker. Everyone could sleep peacefully in their beds; no one need have any arms or gasmasks; the world would be a Utopia; everybody would be *prosperous*; there would be no Distressed Areas; Mr. Baldwin could lay down the Premiership: King Edward VIII would never have met Mrs. Simpson; Mr. Roosevelt could give his undivided attention to 'the Forgotten Man'; there would be no influenza epidemic (which started in Berlin); the Thames would not heave with indignation and overflow its banks—if it were not for Herr Hitler.

I am completely at a loss for any plausible explanation for this truly amazing situation. Nothing justifies it. The effect is so vastly out of proportion to the cause, that one can only rub one's eyes in astonishment.

But it means to all of us a very great deal. For it probably means war, a war that, as far as I can see, would be an entirely purposeless one.

I can understand that Mr. Stalin should dislike Hitler, because the latter is very rude to Communists. I can understand M. Blum disliking Hitler, because the latter is impolite to Jews. But, although obviously Hitler would never be his cup of tea, I cannot see what Mr. Baldwin should feel so incredibly deeply about. That is where, as a good Bolsho-Tory, I just come to a dead end, and ask myself, am I dreaming?

I must confess myself defeated by this conundrum. Under these circumstances, all I can do is to stick to the facts of the Writing on the Wall, for all to see. And it is very ominous.

A Great War about Nothing

A great war against Germany is in course of preparation. That is what it looks like. I hope very much I am wrong.

The Government newspapers over Christmas put the matter with exemplary plainness—put it to Germany. Two choices lie before Germany, it was announced. Either she must 'co-operate', or she must be prepared for attack. For she could not be allowed to continue to arm. 'Co-operation' meant, apparently, borrowing money from American, French, and English banks; accepting Russian Communism as a little oddity in the north of Europe, no more: and agreeing to become part of the Franco-Soviet military system. These conditions—a sort of new *Diktat*—Germany clearly cannot accept.

First, other countries surrounded Germany, armed to the teeth. Although France was given *Locarno* to enable her to fulfil her engagements under *Versailles* to disarm, she did not do so. Steadily she increased and perfected her armaments, until Europe had become politically dependent on an all-powerful France, where all the gold was, and all the Big Battalions.

Hitler arrived on the scene. It was the end of the French hegemony. Germany at once claimed the right to have something more than a fire-brigade and a few gunboats. Germany has now got a certain amount of what she then claimed, but is still not so strong as France alone.

But there is Russia. Russia is if anything more heavily armed to-day than France. And France and Russia are allies. When Germany was suspected of having a tank or two France (with a thousand at least of those weapons) bellowed about 'security' *à tue tête*. Ever since, this uproar

has continued. And Britain and Russia have joined in with their deeper roar, at the back of France.

So we have had the laughable spectacle of the three greatest empires in the world, Britain, Russia, and France bellowing in a panic chorus: 'Stop!—or I don't know what we shall do but we *shall!*' because a bankrupt State, with no trained reserves, no fleet, no allies, was as quickly as possible putting itself in a posture of defence, lest its rather unorthodox ideas (which it noted with dismay were wildly unpopular) should lead to armed interference.

Here I am able to speak with entire detachment. My own interest in Germany has always been slight. I have preferred the Latin mind to the German mind. I am no pro-German. I am as little pro-German as I am anti-semite, for instance. But I have been astounded at this uproar, which has deafened us morning and night.

Among my friends I have frequently protested. I have asked them what it was all about, why they were so angry, why they flung themselves about.

However, they were inarticulate when challenged. It was as if they had received a mysterious order to make as much noise as possible but did not exactly know why.

I was informed by one, however, that Hitler intended to attack London with bombs. I asked *why?*—No reason.—Was it in Hitler's interest, from any conceivable standpoint?—No. But was Hitler sane? That was this friend's retort.

Thereupon I enquired into Hitler's sanity. He has a few notions, I found, that are peculiar to Germans, and which we do not share. He thought the Jews aimed at political power as well as financial power, and that the Germans had a monopoly of the qualities that go with a

fresh complexion and flaxen hair. As I do not happen to admire those qualities—I am fair myself—I took no interest in that. He was welcome to them as far as I was concerned.

In other respects he seemed to have his head screwed on pretty straight. Indeed, in his exchanges with our Foreign Secretary, it was rather *the latter* who appeared somewhat irrational and unhinged, and Herr Hitler who showed up as sweetly reasonable by comparison. And as to his manners, they were diplomatically impeccable, whereas ours decidedly were not.

There it is. We are going to have a war it seems. I have no explanation. You, like the rest of us, must put two and two together. I have given you your *twos*. If you cannot arrive at *four* by the ordinary processes of addition, I cannot do it for you.

A last word before Launcelot. First and last, I said, my message was that the present system of government in England is a *fake antique*. It is a machine-made grandfather's clock. It is cleverly 'faked' to look old; with eighteenth-century works; with a big wheezy tick; with a weatherbeaten face of bogus respectability and age. A full parliamentary cast performs for our benefit, with people playing 'P.M.' and all the rest of it, possessing as little political power as screen-stars in a *House of Rothschild* film. A disarming façade of 'democracy' conceals what is in fact a Money Trust, which runs us like a national waxworks, but for whom we are a side-line, not their main concern. We are not by any means the biggest pebble on the beach. As a 'nation' we have ceased to exist.

From time to time somebody lets the cat out of the bag. Mr. Attlee for instance. He asserts (in a speech in

Paris) that the nations must give up these obsolete principles to which they cling, such as 'national sovereignty'. We assume that that means Germany. We are mistaken. It means everybody. We do not see it, but it also means *us*.

Without 'national sovereignty' however—which means political freedom for the individual State, a democratic principle, surely—there can be no 'patriotism'. That makes nonsense of patriotism. And so when we are appealed to as 'patriots'—told to be 'patriotic' and 'shoulder' another shilling in the pound of personal taxation, or to go to war because 'our country is in danger' (see Lord Milne) that is part of the *fake antique*.

If Internationalism is the order of the day, well and good. Then it is appropriate that we should be 'volunteers' in an International Brigade (in Spain, Poland, Austria, or elsewhere). But it is not appropriate to invite us to volunteer for a nationalist army, to take part in a 'nationalist war', if internationalism is to be the official political philosophy. That must be plain enough.

Mr. Baldwin's remark that 'our frontier is the Rhine' is the remark of a confirmed internationalist. Indeed it is a perfect instance of internationalist thinking. For the frontiers of England are its white cliffs and red cliffs, and can never be the frontier between France and Germany, the River Rhine. To say that they are internationalism, and internationalism of a pernicious kind. And that dictum of our Prime Minister, too, lets the cat out of the bag, just as Mr. Attlee, arguing on similar lines, let the cat out of the bag. To go and fight for the Prudential Insurance Company's mines in Poland would not be to fight for England. It would not be a patriotic act. It might even, in the event, be highly unpatriotic.

But really we have reached a point, with the outbreak of doctrinal wars, with the alarm-sirens in all the Press of the world at full blast, when something must be done. This system is unmasking. Almost in overt insolence it consigns us to the internationalist shambles. As cannon-fodder for Russia we will *not* be conscripted. And cannot we say, for many of us feel it, that we are tired of this puppet play? We want actors of flesh and blood again; for the antics of these dolls is most depressing in the long run.

This fake system must in the end be scrapped. Why not scrap it now? Only the nation can save the nation. The whole nation should act. It should get back power. It should smash this sham façade, obtain control of its national Exchequer (which only exists by virtue of its brains and toil), and take back its National Sovereignty, of which it has been robbed. So we should once more be a nation. A Sovereign Nation, whether Mr. Attlee liked it or not.

This act of revolution cannot be performed by Communism, because Communism is Internationalist by definition and in its essence. And it is precisely Internationalism that we should seek to drive out, not to confirm, not make more absolute.

The solution to which we are being driven by our acquiescence in present events, is Communism. Consciously or unconsciously (it is the latter in Great Britain, where nothing is conscious) the puppets who pretend to govern us accept this solution, in their hearts, if they do not explicitly, as the alternative to themselves. But *we* should not accept it. We should say to them: 'Thanks awfully, but we have other ideas for our future *and* our present too. Get out!'

I must say that my Leader is in no way to blame. He is honest, but misguided. I am sure he thinks that if he, and his sort, went, then Communism would step in, in the natural course of things. He realizes that the system that he works is on its last legs, he can hear it crack, he feels it reeling under him.

He will not be asked to endure Communism himself. But after he has gone I am sure that he believes that some lovely William Morrisish sort of Webb-like Soviet will take his place. As to the Distressed Areas, and things of that order, there's just nothing to be done about them. *His* system can't grapple with them. His masters would never allow him to. All that will have to wait for Communism. And there's an end of it.

Communism would step in, because that is the *natural* solution, Mr. Baldwin would argue, in his private mind. Much as he disliked the idea, there is nothing for it but that.

There is no issue whatsoever but Communism, as the logical outcome of the progressive enslavement resulting from 'Loan-Capital'. If you accept one you must sooner or later accept the other. Something as near as damn it to Soviet Russia would ensue *of its own accord*. But how much better to bring it about under the salvationist banners of Marx! How much more satisfactory to speed things up a bit, and to be able to represent this enslavement as a Great Deliverance!

That this is not Mr. Baldwin's conscious standpoint I am quite positive. But the cause-and-effect prospect outlined above is *the fact*, which underlies the illusions of that old clubman, our respected Leader. And facts have a way of getting into the consciousness of people. In a moment of temper—extremely provoked perhaps by

some account of unemployed Welsh families going to bed at six, three or four in a bed, from sheer boredom and hopelessness, Mr. Baldwin might exclaim: 'Well, if they don't like *us*, they'd better call in the Communists!' As if, in short, the Communists were to Mr. Baldwin the *only* solution. A solution, he realized, which could not be much longer delayed.

But Marx, with his dreadful plan for helot states, is *not* the only solution. My Leader would excommunicate me if he could hear me, but Fascism is at least a better solution than that. I will be thoroughly naughty, and say that Fascism might be a very good solution indeed. But *any* solution would be better than Marx. And this present Fake Antique leads straight to Marx. It cannot be considered apart from Marx, indeed. And if we do not want Marx, we must get rid of the present system without too much delay.

The present Fake Antique, typified by Colonel Blimp, is an Aunt Sally merely for the Marxist coconuts of Mr. David Low. Its 'Distressed Areas' might almost have been put there—might almost be preserved—on purpose to oblige Marx.

But in my talks with Launcelot you will hear much more upon all these matters. 'All revolutions are brought about either by force or by fraud!' That is Aristotle, a sensible Greek. We in England have suffered a revolution. It was effected by means of *fraud*, rather than force. The fraud continues. The Revolutionaries are dug in behind a fake antique front. To-day it is a National Front. To-morrow it will be a Popular Front. *Ye Olde England*. But let us counter-attack. Let us dislodge them. Let us be free men again. Why not?

NED.

LAUNCELOT PROLOGIZES

LAUNCELOT PROLOGIZES

HELP! I'm thinking aloud!

Buzz buzz buzz. The wheels are whirling round. Wow wow wow! Words are yapped out, as the brain sorts them and sticks them end to end, and the tongue snatches them up and talks them out to us. Hour after hour—what topping fun! Talk about people who like to hear themselves talk. I just adore to hear myself *think*!

It's damn funny what one says when one's thinking aloud. And I always am. Or so Ned says. Ned and I have been Hector Bolitho and Patroclus to each other, a couple of *Et tu Brutes*, for as long as I can remember. We were at Harrow and then up at Oxford together. We're inseparable. Once when we were talking he said: 'I wish I had a shorthand note of that!'—'Of what?' I asked. 'Of what you've just said. It was priceless.'

I must confess I was a bit flattered at that at the time. 'How do you mean?' I asked him, fishing for *more* compliments. 'It's such a *waste*,' he said. 'You say the most divine things sometimes. And to think it should all be lost. That is the tragedy of life. Ninety per cent of the best things are *said* and never get *written*.'

Well, I said no more at the time. But I thought this over. And the result is what you see. First I tried to keep a diary. That was a washout. Some days there was nothing to say. At other times I had only just started putting down all the things that happened, and there

all of a sudden was the bottom of the dashed page. A new day began on the next one, and I couldn't put *Tuesday* stuff under *Wednesday* could I?

I tried after that a spot of *composition*! Ahem! But apart from the fact that it was a job only fit for a galley-slave—great words I wrestled with and couldn't spell and little words that got in where they shouldn't be when I wasn't paying attention—it was no good at all. The thoughts stopped coming out, if you understand me. I seemed to have nothing to say worth saying, the way I wanted to say it. It was the *way* of saying it that got me down. In the end there was nothing to write about, only a wash of words that meant nothing, a Mississippi.

But old Ned one day stared at me as if I were the Adelphi oracle. I forget what I'd said. Something about a man's doing his bit on the Piccadilly Front. It was just after I'd ticked off a Red who'd started spouting Bolsh in the smoking-room after a double Scotch.

Ned said I didn't *talk* but just opened my mouth and the words came shuffling out as if I 'had my brain in my mouth'. I said I'd heard of people having their *hearts* in their mouths. But he only said he wasn't sure I hadn't got my brain where my liver ought to be.

I'm fey. It's the Dutch strain. I often feel what I say isn't *me*. Just to try it out, I opened my mouth again. Just opened it a half an inch, like a screen-star about to be snapshotted. Sure enough I began talking and went on for some time. I said a lot of good things. At last Ned stopped me.

'It's all right,' he said. 'I can read your thoughts as a matter of fact *before you speak*. So you can cut out the rest. You needn't trouble to say all that. We'll take it as said. Really!'

That was a bit of a damper. I forget what it was about. The Means Test I think it was. I feel pretty strongly about the Means Test. I mean about the outcry of the Reds. I could have gone on for much longer, if he hadn't stopped me.

Ned has often said of me that I am *typical*. But if I really was that, I said to myself, I'd better get something out of being typical. What's the use of being typical after all if no one knows you are? All the greatest characters in books are *types*. That's right I think. So if I'm a type, too, well it's up to me! So I weighed in as a *type*. I got out a lot of foolscap and a pen and ink and I let fly.

When I said to Ned at last that I thought I'd write down my thoughts just as they came out, as my grandchildren might like to hear them some day, Ned replied that he would go much further than that. My grandchildren, he said, *would never forgive me* if I *didn't* write them down. If they knew how amusing they were, they wouldn't miss them for anything. That settled it.

My grandchildren ought to know what we were all thinking. It's a pretty important time to live in. We're making history fairly fast. They'll be considerably puzzled some of them to understand what we were all up to.

I shall hide nothing. For that matter why should I? I shall be *entre nous* with my engaging descendants (except for a few friends, who may see this if it's printed). I shall just think *aloud*, that is what will be so interesting, and then they'll see exactly what was going on in our minds.

But time is short. With a half-dozen dictators banging at the door with mailed fists, I shouldn't have time, if I wanted to, to do much else. As I sit here and think, my pen will jot it all down for you and a printer's devil

set it up afterwards nice and neat. That is if, as I may, I get it printed for my own amusement.

Politics is what I always think about. Like the rest of us I couldn't, I suppose, think about much else, as things are.

But a man in my station of course is born to politics, as others are born to market-gardening. He is after all a *ruler*. It is his class that has to do the political thinking, so he can't like an ordinary man attend to his private affairs. *Noblesse oblige* I suppose.

We are a very political family. My father sat for the Soddun division of Dumberry for thirty years. He was a House of Commons man if ever there was one. Towards the end he didn't like leaving the House. He'd never have left I believe except for the cleaners. He had sometimes to be dragged almost out of his seat, where he'd been dozing all day, and he died as he was tipping the attendant for helping him on with his coat. Rather a good death — *to die tipping!*

Where shall I begin? Things look pretty sticky at the Bosphorus. I see Goering's been having a bathe there. Or was it in the Bight of Capri? I've been worrying for some days about Goering. For a man of his size he gets about a great deal. It must be anxious work for our Foreign Office keeping him under observation. A most dangerous man! Fat and fierce. I wish we could lay him by the heels. Indeed the whole boiling of them.

When I last went to the play with Shoots, that's a young female cousin, one of the actor-wallahs bellowed out: 'Necessity knows no law!' as he wrenched a gel out of a dressing-room. (It was on the stage. It was a make-believe dressing-room.)

'Necessity knows no law.' I had forgotten where I

had heard it. Then it came back to me with a rush. You may remember—a grim little saying of the tactless old Hun (with whom we're having a spot of bother again, worse luck). In that little show (1914-18) he was fond of saying that. 'Necessity knows no law!' (The fellow was thinking aloud!) It got into our Press. It made a very bad impression.

The law means a great deal to us. 'The Rule of law' is the sort of saying that appeals to us. That's because we're law-abiding I suppose. So Mr. Fritz couldn't have hit upon anything less calculated to please us.

At the time the German was heard muttering to himself 'Necessity knows no law' we were blockading him (and quite right too). We were putting the hunger-screw on his Home Front. His *Hausfrau* got a bit less liver-sausage. A tough lot! Sex and age loses its meaning somehow when it's Huns we're talking about.

The old Boche's mouth was watering. He'd been watching fat rump steaks being brought in British Bottoms from the Argentine, and Turkish Delight from the Sublime Porte and portly hams from Copenhagen and Dutch Cheeses from the Hook, for British suppers. His horrid old *Hausfrau* and all the little budding Boches were a bit on the peckish side by this time and he was getting sore. They were being starved into submission, 'Naval power' was doing the trick. It always does. So at last the fellow burst out, in his crude unfeeling way: 'Necessity knows no law!' and he just let fly with a torpedo from one of his horrible U-boats and sank all the beefsteaks and the bacon.

Seeing what he was doing, however, in his corpse-factories at the time, where he boiled down bodies to get fats and oils the cannibal, this is not so surprising.

But it does all remind one, looking back on it, of General Franco doesn't it and his bloodthirsty Moors. These black brutes slaughter the kind and peaceable Spanish workers in batches. I'm told they skin them alive. How history repeats itself! There's something about a foreigner that a clean Englishman will never understand. We somehow always come back to that. I know it sounds a little racially self-righteous, like the German's 'Aryan' rubbish. But with us it's *different*. As a matter of fact it's *true*! We *are* White. They only pretend to be.

As a result of the German—or the *Boche* as I for one still prefer to call him—behaving in this dastardly way with our food ships (for after all a nation 'fights on its stomach' and no man of honour kicks another in the bread basket) the poorer classes went short for a while. There wasn't enough butter to go round. The lower orders had to have margarine. Not that that mattered, you may think, but no gentleman would do it all the same. It takes—a Hun, what!

But that's ancient history. These Germans in the year of grace 1937 are twice as bad as they were before. They say that Moses Rosenberg—'Don Moses' Garvin calls him, the Soviet nuncio in Madrid—is a Jew. It's a bit thick. Also Litvinov, if you please—the President of the League of Nations. They even call Litvinov a *communist*, as well as a Jew!

We shall have to teach Mr. Fritz another lesson I am sorely afraid. It is evident that the last smack we gave him has not finished him. He's as bombastic and self-assertive as ever. After what he did last year in the Rhineland—which is our Frontier as Mr. Baldwin so neatly put it—no one can feel safe. A man who can walk about within a few miles of our frontier is capable of anything.

It's no use your German casuist arguing that it's *his own country*. All that 'sovereign state' stuff is as dead as the dodo. It's dangerous doctrine too. Why, we have no right to call England *ours* have we? England belongs to . . . Never mind! (Though there are those who say that Uncle Sam has put an arm-lock on our pound sterling and tied it to the dollar.) But let's cut out all this *meum* and *tuum* stuff for good and all. I didn't quite like Mr. Baldwin referring to the Rhine as 'our frontier'. That 'our' of his has to me an un-Christian and possessive ring I didn't relish coming from a God-fearing man like Mr. Baldwin.

Well we've got started and I must say that thinking aloud is pretty good fun. Besides it clears your mind out, and gives you an appetite. I'm ravenous. I always find I get hungry after I've done a spot of thinking.

Thinking aloud isn't always possible. All the more reason to do so when and where it's allowed. Ha ha! *Allowed*. Thinking aloud. See it?

If I were dining at Buckingham Palace (I should not be the first Nidwit to do so) or breaking a crust in the Kremlin, it wouldn't be at all popular. At the Palace I should undoubtedly be discouraged by Black Rod or somebody, whereas in the latter little proletarian wigwam I should certainly be drawn and quartered on the spot (or would have been last year, when they were still pretty Bolshie). But it's all right thinking aloud before the British public. They won't notice anything amiss. They never do I sometimes think. Look at Mr. Baldwin! He's always thinking aloud, when he's not *sealed* as he calls it. (I must apologize for this, it was a slip of the pen.) They like it. They'll only think I'm up the pole Ned says, or else 'very clever' (same thing!).

Me, as *clever*, made me chortle! And p'raps some of the odds and ends they hear may stick in their stove-pipes. Who knows? For I have a power of quiet little thoughts of my own to unload. One or two are sure to find a home in other skulls than mine.

The trouble about thinking aloud is that the thoughts come tumbling out and they are apt to get in a jam. But still that doesn't matter. The really big ones by sheer avoirdupois get to the front. And that's what we want. So here goes. Here's my first big thought.

POSTSCRIPT

I showed Ned what I'd written. Ned is the fellow I mentioned, he's my greatest friend.

Old Ned laughed a great deal when he'd read what I'd written down for the benefit of my grandchildren. I'm afraid he wasn't exactly complimentary. He said my grandchildren would have many a good laugh over their grandpa. And he proceeded to have a good laugh himself, just as if he'd been one of the more facetious of my descendants. I was a little peeved at first with old Ned, I am prepared to confess.

Then he went very grave—which is almost his worst trick. I oughtn't to refer he said to the Great War as 'that little show', or whatever it was I said. I do see that, though. It was a foolish expression.

But one gets in the way of understating for fear of overstating. Overstatement is the besetting sin of the Britisher. And I think that 'the Great War' is at least as inaccurate, as a matter of fact. I told him so. He looked up at me with a quick stare and greatly to my surprise he said I was probably right. It was *long* he said and *big*. But then, he said, it wasn't a *war* anyway. So that was that.

About the war Ned tried to prove how it was really *me* who was the brute. He said I'd convicted myself out of my own mouth. Of being the world's biggest fool, and a preposterous hypocrite. This was a bit over the odds. If there's one thing I'm *not* that's a hypocrite.

He said I shouldn't call a countryman of Kant and Bach a 'Boche' and should try not to be such a con-founded schoolboy. (I thought that was rather rich, coming from old Ned, who's not changed a bit since we were at Harrow.) He said I was old enough to know better among other things, though I'm two years and a half or anyhow two years his junior. He called me an old 'Encircler'. He said that if you tried to 'encircle' people you must expect them to try and break through the 'circle'. The 'circle of death', Mr. Lloyd George had called it who has returned to his Bolshevism and his Limehouse charlatanry in his old age.

What an Encircler meant I was at a loss to guess at first. But I saw afterwards. Edward VII (the 'Peacemaker') was a wicked old 'Encircler,' according to Ned. The 'Entente Cordiale', which led to the Great War, was his idea. It was a military alliance with France against Germany. That's why Edward the Peacemaker was called the 'Peacemaker'. Ned said he was put up to it by unsuitable people in whose company he spent too much of his time. It's funny, that's just what the Archbishop said about Edward VIII. That his friends weren't nice. Although he apparently had been put up to doing the opposite, and by shaking hands with ex-enemies would in due course have earned the title of Edward the Warmaker, I imagine.

But I wasn't going to have that. I told Ned pretty plainly that I didn't know what business it was of *his* what

friends Edward VII had, but Ned only laughed in his crowing, patronizing way and said he paid their descendants and others a hell of a lot too much in income tax, for war bonds, he said, and 'bloody-fingered usury' and blood-painted Flanders Poppies.

Ned is blessed with his fair share of this world's goods and if you touch his pocket he is apt to get tough. He goes all Bolshie if you so much as mention a bank. Which is odd. For he must be a lot more popular in his bank than I am in mine. He was particularly rude about my remarks concerning General Franco, the Spanish 'rebel'. He laughs at the word 'rebel'. But the B.B.C. uses it and why shouldn't I?

But my next big thought is really Ned's about Spain, and so I'll wait till I come to write that down to say it. Ned said that General Franco's Moors weren't Black Men at all, to start with. The French sent regular Niggers into the Ruhr (apart from their Nigger Army defending Paris and the Nigger Army of the Yankees too) to enrage the Boche—I mean the Germans. For I agree 'Boche' is a term of contempt. And I have no wish to be offensive even to an ex-enemy. I'm with Mr. Eden there, who is really awfully decent to them and has often said he'd like to 'co-operate' and makes lots of nice kind enquiries after their health and *moral tone* and whether they really at last are getting over the German measles and might come out of quarantine, or if they are still infectious. I *hate* being regarded as a germ-carrier, and so must the Germans.

Although they're not Christians, Franco's Moors are not Black at all it seems, only rather dirty. Of course they are *Hoi Poloi*,¹ I mean they're not all Sheiks, but if

¹ We will stick to the spelling, I think, of this scholar and gentleman. (Ed.)

you *washed* them Ned says they'd be as White as some of our present Cabinet. On the other hand the 'legitimate government of Spain' as *The Times* calls the government of Don Moses has Tartar guards who are much more 'foreign' to Spaniards than the Berbers of the Riff, who are much what the Normans are to us. All this Ned explained to me. Spain's got much more Moorish blood, he said, than we have Norman. Old Ned laughed quite a lot at my remark about Litvinov being called a 'communist'. He said he *was*. And when I said 'Not a Bolshie?' he laughed again, and said he was afraid he was, though not more so than M. Baldwin or Mr. Blum. He's the oddest fish, is Ned.

At last Ned said I was qualifying for Colney Hatch. I told him I was afraid I shouldn't be able to call on him to bail me out, as they'd pull him in too. He went suddenly all grave and worried and said that my case really put his back up. He didn't like to see me in the condition I was in. It showed what happened, he said, to the mind of a very simple man (that was me) if you went on feeding him with a virus of lies. His poor brainpan became a 'kaleidoscope of contradictory nonsense'. He said I should sue the British Broadcasting Company and the British United Press and Gaumont-British for undermining my reason.

At that it was my turn to laugh! If Ned wasn't such a brainy chap, and he's fond of me too, he's the most loyal feller I know, I shouldn't let him lecture me the way he did. But I had an eye-opener. He held forth a bit. It was about Spain. He's unbalanced of course. But about Spain he's pretty hot. Spain is his long suit. He's lived there. Young Primo de Rivera whom they shot—I forget which side—was a friend of his. He said he was a White

LAUNCELOT PROLOGIZES

Man. (It must have been the Moors after all, I suppose, who bumped him off. Or no. They're White too! Help. I'm in a jam.)

Once or twice Ned laughed very heartily. He has a rich noisy laugh that seems to empty him, until another collects. Then he laughs again. It was when I had put down funny things I had thought. He asked me if I knew what they meant. No, I said. For I didn't know what *he* meant.

Often when I'm thinking aloud I say things that don't seem to belong to me. That's what's so amusing about thinking aloud. Ned said: 'I think I rather like your unconscious, Launce.' (My name is Launcelot.) 'You've got rather a smart chap working down in your cellar, under the street-level.' That was his way of saying in my Unconscious Mind. 'I wish you'd promote him,' said he. 'Can't you provide him with an old school tie and bring him along to our club?' 'I think that might spoil him Ned,' I answered. Ned laughed. 'So you keep him tucked away! It's a pity, but maybe you're right.'

I've always been rather keen on the Unconscious and I know what old Ned means. Often I say quite clever things. And it can't possibly be *me* who says them. However, I must be getting ahead with my Thinking Aloud.

THOUGHT ONE

SPAIN

DON MOSES AND THE LION OF JUDAH

(Launcelot thinks Don Moses is pretty hot stuff, and so does Ned.)

THOUGHT ONE

SPAIN: DON MOSES AND THE LION
OF JUDAH

SPAIN, that's my big Thought Number One. Just Spain. Spain has always been left out of the reckoning in Europe, as weak, backward and unimportant. But now we see it's about the most important of the lot. I speak of dago countries. France has got the lion's share of notice, among those.

What are the rights and wrongs of this Spanish business? What should a clean-limbed countryman of ours think about this dirty dago dog-fight, in which all the foreigners in the world seem to be mixed up somehow or other?

There they are all scrapping like cockroaches for the pickings of that musty old State. Old and weak, but jolly important. It reminds me of the carcass of an old dromedary, in a great parched desert, covered with red and black vultures. A pretty sight! What should we think about it? I ask because I haven't made up my mind yet.

Ned thinks that the Lion of Judah was child's play to Moses Rosenberg. 'At Valencia the real master of the camarilla called a "Spanish Government" is Señor Don Moses Rosenberg, the Soviet Ambassador. This fact is notorious.' So says Garvin. I've cut it out of the

Observer. And 'Garvin is always right'—a Tory maxim you know. Ned thinks Don Moses is the cat's whiskers and that he outclasses the Negus as Carnera would a midget. I'm inclined to agree with Ned.

I have it on the best authority—from a lawyer-wallah I know—that the old Negus only got away with his skin and the small change in his pocket. Whereas Don Moses—the uncrowned King of Spain, the Soviet's Colonel Lawrence—lifted a cool hundred million he found in the Bank of Spain. No one was there to stop him. Some crib to crack! If I were a gunman I should hang my head! Politics is the game, if you're a hold-up guy, with a spot of imagination. And the beauty of it is, you've got the *law* on your side too. That's what would appeal to me.

As soon as this ruddy old civil war is over we shall never hear the end of that hundred million, you mark my words.

We've soon forgotten Abyssinia haven't we? We're a rum lot. I never thought we should so soon. It only goes to prove that we English never take things *au grand sérieux*. It's the 'saving sense of humour'. It must be that. It prevents us from brooding about things, once they're over and done with.

But I'm sort of sorry for the old *Lion of Judah*. Haile Selassie, that is; 'the Negus' we used to call him when we wanted to be very grand. He turned up in Palestine when he had to do his moonlight flit with hundreds of suitcases and boxes. Everyone thought they were stuffed to their scuppers with dollar-bills and gold napoleons. But it seems there was nothing in them except the customary trash a nigger-king collects—brass-nosers, bone-bangles, cowrie shells, harmoniums, spare bicycle

parts, bashed-in top-hats and motheaten boaters. Such-like odds and ends. Don Moses Rosenberg has a much better claim to be a 'Lion of Judah' I'm thinking! Ned thinks so. Perhaps he *is* the Lion of Judah for he's got an odd sort of name for a muscovite. They're a mixed lot though.

So my first Thought *re* Spain is that as a waxwork 'draw' at Madame Tussauds I never expected to see the 'Lion of Judah' outdone. In the matter of box-office receipts he must have easily scored top marks. But I was mistaken. Don Moses will beat him hollow. Though I shall never have a warm corner in my heart for the latter as I had for the former. I had a soft spot for that poor old nigger king. We, some of us, let him down pretty badly. I somehow feel Don Moses (as Mr. Garvin calls him—getting familiar already) won't be so damned easy to shake off.

THOUGHT TWO

SPAIN: THE LEGITIMACY OF DON
MOSES

(The Britisher loves Law, therefore he backs through thick and thin
the Legitimate Government of Spain, even if it's no longer legiti-
mate, just because once it was—almost.)

THOUGHT TWO

THE LEGITIMACY OF DON
MOSES

BUT back to Spain: the Peninsula, that is, seen as an annexe of Gibraltar—not as a mere broken-off bit of Red Mother Russia.

It may be the devil speaking. As I've explained, or haven't I, I can't take any responsibility for what I write when I'm thinking aloud. But I'm damned if I can see that all the right is on one side. I mean to say, there *must* be two sides to the question dash it all! The Loyalists must have *some* shortcomings even if the Rebels *are* all we are told they are. Even the Madrid B.B.C. said at Christmastime: 'There must be *some* good on Franco's side. They can't all be bad.' And I don't see that we need be *plus royaliste que le roi* and try and outdo the loyal Spaniards, who after all suffer a good deal more than we do at Franco's hands.

I know everybody in England thinks so—that General Franco's put himself outside the pale, by defying Caballero (that's the Spanish Communist Prime Minister) and Moses Rosenberg (that's the Communist Commissary from Russia who's been sent to Spain to run the show). What's more, it isn't only the riff-raff from the Clydeside who think so. Our lot think so too.

I hate the Bolshies. They're out to wipe out the upper classes. I agree with Winston that if the Germans weren't bigger cads we might give them a leg up on the sly with all their anti-Red nonsense. But when *The Times* and the *Daily Worker* see eye to eye it's a pretty big thing. And they do over Spain. All said and done, I suppose the Soviet is the Legitimate Government in Russia now.

Both the *Daily Worker* and the *Thunderer* think that law is law, and that if the 'Government of the day' goes a bit Pink at the edges and begins shooting up its political opponents and gets burning down churches, it is still, all said and done, the 'Government of the day'. You can't get away from that.

In the most impossible event, seeing the times we live in, the strain of public life what it is, of the entire Cabinet going off its rocker: what would be the position then? Suppose they were certified insane. Why not? It would still and in spite of that be the duty of all law-abiding men to obey it. Else you're a 'rebel'. You can't get away from that.

Take another case. Suppose the Legitimate Government (the 'Government of the day') are all locked up in a room—say in Madrid—by a gang of desperate men of rather 'popular' or 'left' tendencies. At the point of the revolver they are compelled to sign a whole lot of, well, a bit brutal decrees. Still it makes no difference. All *law-abiding* men are bound to submit to these measures, even if they're a bit on the Bolshie side, or even rank Red Revolution. Otherwise can they claim any longer to be law-abiding? Obviously not.

If you arrogate to yourself the right to question the measures introduced by the Legitimate Government

(of the day) can you still describe yourself as law-abiding? Or God-fearing? I am afraid not. Admittedly it is a terrible position for a man to find himself in. But I don't think any Englishman would hesitate. That's what's given the Englishman his strength.

But suppose the Government of the day abolish God? A nice point that. Suppose they charge all loyal subjects to stamp out, wherever found, His ministers and servants, male or female? Same answer I'm afraid. You have to obey. It's a bit hard, admittedly, on a religious sort of chap. But to be *law-abiding* you must even agree to dispense with God. For a God-fearing man there can be no greater sacrifice than that. You must do your duty when you meet a priest for instance. He has become an outlaw. Hard luck on the wafer and wine wallah. But *orders is orders* as Marcus says. No. There is *only one way* of being law-abiding. And that is to observe an implicit obedience to the Government of the day.

These are the views of the official organs of opinion in England. And it's a pretty powerful line of argument! It's an argument that I for one feel incompetent to tackle. I don't see how you can escape from it. As an Englishman, frankly I feel ashamed to find myself inclined (ever so little) to question it. 'Ours not to reason why—'Ours but to do and die!' That's the English way. And I don't know a better.

Before the Bar of British Justice there is only one gleam of hope for the outlaw Franco. Namely that the Government of Azaña—and this applies infinitely more to that of Caballero and his Russian boss—did not possess a majority.

Two hundred thousand more Spaniards voted Right than voted Left in the Last Spanish Election. Ned swears

this is correct. It is a fact that the B.B.C. and the official Press, also the Government of the day (I mean ours) must have overlooked.

That certainly puts another complexion on it. That *does* make a difference. If it were not for that I promise you that I for one should not be writing in the way I am about Franco—who's a bit of an outsider and hasn't a penny to bless himself with. The other side snaffled all the money, though Franco's forging a lot of notes I'm told.

An Englishman who does not wish to condemn Franco out of hand as a common malefactor can take heart from this circumstance, that after all he does represent the Majority. If *The Times* only knew, I feel it might be a bit shamefaced about what it's done for Caballero and the rather Bolshie lot who have collected round him. Only natural they should collect around him, seeing Caballero's himself a Bolshie.

I'm pretty sure that *pukka sahib* who broadcasts every night at six wouldn't call Franco a 'rebel' any more if he knew. He doesn't *sound* the sort of feller who would lend himself to anything underhand or illegal.

It in no way excuses Franco, admittedly, for lifting a finger against those who are the *de facto* Government of Spain. Not until a proper election had been held. And that holds even if no bona fide election *could* be held under the circumstances. But when I heard that even the first Government, and that was not Caballero's and Rosenberg's, was not a real Majority, that did weigh with me, as you may imagine. An Englishman's not going to go against the Majority, even if it is illegitimate.

Perhaps I have got a little muddled over this. I shouldn't be surprised. For as a matter of fact I have

never thought out what would happen if a genuine election *could* not be held, and if a revolutionary Minority Government refused to hand over power, and continued daily to murder all those belonging to the Opposition, until there were none left and *they* were the Majority—because all their opponents were dead. It is a moot point.

Of course I know that the enemies of Democracy (may their souls rot in Hell and their children's children be born with black spots all over them, as one of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets put it, in the fine frenzy of one of his most truly Christian paroxysms—how I enjoyed that bit when I had to read the Lessons as a small boy) try to make use of a situation of this kind to discredit us.

I realize that many of the cavillers who make it their business to belittle our time-honoured parliamentary institutions, assert that when a law is out of date, when the letter of the law bears oppressively and cruelly upon great numbers of innocent people, that that law should then be changed. It comes, they say, under the head of 'the Dead Hand'. But that is a very dangerous doctrine indeed. That, gentlemen, cuts at the very root of the idea of Law. For however absurd a law may be, it is still *Law*. Look at 'Dora'. Why do Englishmen put up with it, sometimes it is asked? Because it is *Law*; as such they respect it! It is nothing less than *criminal* to point out that such a law was imposed by a half-dozen stupid old men; and to hint that some other half-dozen not very intelligent gentlemen could repeal it. That is rank treason. It leads straight to Bolshevism.

Why, in my club—I am proud to say a very ancient club—there is a very rich and powerful magnate who

has been trying to get in for several years. But incessantly and unfailingly he has been blackballed. I have heard members say (who have received many benefits from the personage in question, who is a very eminent international financier as a matter of fact) that the constitution of the club should be altered, in order to overcome this blackball difficulty, and to let in this most kind, open-handed, wonderfully intelligent magnate.

But I say *No*. I will blackball him with my last breath. And that in spite of the fact that he is an Armenian. I will oppose any monkeying with the constitution of the club. Not that I have anything against him (though he has never tipped me a winner in the stock-market or even soothed me with champagne). It is because Law is law, and if you change one you change all. The fact that he was an Armenian did worry me a lot at first, I am ready to confess. For I thoroughly recognize that after the way the Turks have treated them, Armenians have a first call on any Briton's consideration. Yes, even above what we owe to a man of our own breed. But I would not allow myself to be swayed by that. For Law is law, whether of a club or of a country.

So my second thought about Spain is about Law. Franco is a dastardly rebel. His hand is against every clean White Man's, and every White Man's hand is against him. I hold no brief for Franco.

The B.B.C. is just—it is terribly just. In a word, it is White. But when—in its measured, condescending, slightly nasal, tones, of sublime cultivation—it speaks of Franco, it speaks as a White Man speaks when he is—not roused, not ruffled, for you cannot ruffle the truly just, but distinctly *displeased*: as when he is referring to a member of the lower orders who has forgotten

himself and ventured, when reproved, to answer back.

In spite of all this, Franco *has* a case. In his wretched way, he is not quite outside the pale. Even in the last election—which, in the well-recognized see-saw movement inseparable from any democratic mass, had taken its leftward swing—still a majority of the Spanish people voted for the principles so vilely upheld by the unmentionable Franco. More Spaniards think like Franco than like Moses Rosenberg. It is a thought that the just must think, if they think at all—which I agree is not necessary, or ultimately in the interests of justice.

POSTSCRIPT

I showed this Thought to Ned. He was very objectionable indeed. He said I had softening of the brain. He said I decidedly 'had a case' against the B.B.C. for droning at me until I didn't know if I were standing on my head or my heels. Then he gave me his version of Franco. Before he'd finished I really *didn't* know which end of me was on the floor and which in the air. He's such a plausible fellow and he's got as much grey matter in his little finger as I've got in the whole of my body.

THOUGHT THREE

SPAIN: 'GRIM ENTHUSIASM'

(Launcelot reads a topping article by a British Member of Parliament, who went to Madrid. Franco's stingy treatment of visiting M.P.s and the largesse of Don Moses contrasted. The Rebels, Launcelot remarks, are the *Have-nots*, where Don Moses is the *Have*, in this connection. How is it that the Bolshies always seem to be on the right side these days, Launcelot wonders? On the side of law and order? And the right side is of course always the strong side. Hitler's warships are all dropping to pieces—bad workmanship, shortage of necessary raw materials, owing to pacific blockade—and his planes won't fly, his bombs fail to explode, his 'volunteers' are inferior to all other 'volunteers'. Moral: *Poor old Hitler!*)

THOUGHT THREE

‘GRIM ENTHUSIASM’

My third Thought is about Spain, too. I’ve been getting it up, and it looks to me pretty black against Franco.

I read a topping article yesterday by a British Member of Parliament, who had been to Madrid. He went there with a half-dozen others, all M.P.s. The Legitimate Government allowed them ten bob a day for exes. That’s pretty White that! But some newspapers suffering from a morbid national pride objected to the legislators of Britain falling in with this arrangement—six M.P.s went out a bit later to Franco’s headquarters. But Franco is as stingy as he is rebellious. No exes if you please! It’s obvious enough on which side the £ s. d. is in this show. The Government of the day *behaves* like a ‘legitimate Government’ even if it isn’t. Don Moses does things in style. A real White Man.

As to the unseemly Press protests at the time. There was of course no question of a bribe. You do not bribe a man with ten bob a day—which anyway it costs him to get about. Even a socialist wallah would want more than that for whitewashing you! No, it’s a question of *pride*. In the palmy days of Lord Palmerston it wouldn’t have looked well, I dare say. We were such a stuck-up lot in those times, we British. But *autre temps autre mœurs*. I hope I’ve spelt this all right. French is not my long suit.

There's another point. If you are called in by an appellant before the Bar of International Opinion, to give your unbiased decision on some issue of life and death, if we were going to be great sticklers, and morbidly sensitive to appearances, we should, I suppose, deny ourselves even a free lunch of bully beef and biscuits. But how about our transport to the scene of the crime? It's really too much to ask poor old England to go and umpire these dago shooting-matches and pay her own travelling exes! If it's the Legitimate Government that calls you in, to bear witness against a Rebel, then it is different anyway. For it's a foregone conclusion in whose favour you'll give your verdict, namely for the Legitimate Government. As an Englishman what else could you do?

Wilfred Roberts was the name of the M.P. whose article I saw. He's the Liberal member for Cumberland North. His article was headed 'The Government. A true "Popular Front". Grim Enthusiasm.'

It was a pretty brainy article. Of course the Liberals are a brainy crowd. We're 'the stupid party', I suppose that can't be gainsaid. But he didn't give many examples of the 'Grim Enthusiasm'. I wanted to hear about that.

However, I've been reading up the old files of a lot of papers and I found quite a lot of examples of 'grim enthusiasm' in reports of happenings in Madrid and elsewhere, which Mr. Roberts didn't mention. I suppose he hadn't got room. And then of course he had to devote a good deal of space to the Germans. He couldn't see any of course, but Spain is full of them as everyone knows.

An Englishman who'd been fighting in the ranks of the Legitimate Government (I'm glad to say I have so far found no mention of a Britisher fighting for the Rebels) was lying wounded in a Paris hospital. How he

got there I don't know, but he was a plucky lad and I suppose he flew there rather than take up precious space and draw away attention from more serious cases in the Spanish hospitals. It's the English way.¹ He said that about a hundred people were murdered every day in Madrid, when he was there as a militiaman by the Communist bands and Committees of Public Safety. These unfortunates would be the usual inhabitants of Madrid you used to see in the cafés, women and men, who were suspected of preferring Franco to Don Moses. The Legitimate Government told these hot-headed patriots not to, but what was the use? Besides, they couldn't be too hard on such enthusiastic chaps, who after all, were only punishing potential class-enemies and outlaws. There's no knowing how many budding Francos were wiped out in this way. It's rough justice, certainly. But life is short and one can't look into every niggling little case. One would never be done at that rate.

This was an example of what I suppose might be described as 'grim enthusiasm' which I looked for in vain in Mr. Roberts's article, excellent as it was. His article wasn't half grim enough for my taste; though it was awfully *enthusiastic*. It had somehow a Sunday school scent about it, of bread-and-butter-and-jam and afternoon tea in a posh trench, not too near the hordes of horrid Blackamoors. It didn't seem *real* somehow. That's the only criticism I have to make.

Mr. Roberts said that most of Franco's soldiers were black. Franco only has thirty thousand I think Mr. Roberts said, all told, and 'the large majority of those were Moors'. The reason Franco can only get Moors to

¹ *Correction.* I remember now. He said it was because there was a shortage of dressings and antiseptics and he thought he'd die.

fight for him is naturally because he is a Rebel. Also because he has no money.

No proper Spaniard would fight for Franco. It is really a rather extraordinary feat on the part of this little brigand. He holds down against its will the population of more than half of Spain, by means of not more than thirty thousand Blackamoors, all of whom are pretty fully occupied in the trenches round Madrid. This must be a record. One wouldn't believe it possible if it weren't for the testimony of so many people like Mr. Roberts who go there to see for themselves—pukka M.P.s as straight as gun barrels, who wouldn't say it if it weren't true.

It must I suppose be out of sheer terror of these ferocious niggers—who *might* suddenly turn round and kill them all if Madrid fell—that the Spaniards in Seville, Salamanca, San Sebastian and so on remain so quiet and get on with their business as if they were all rebels—instead of longing, as one knows they must, to be under Don Moses.

I was rather disappointed, though, when I read Mr. Roberts's article, not to see any mention of the Foreign Legion. I suppose there are none left. This does not surprise me, however. When I was looking through the back numbers of the papers I read about the siege of Irun by Franco's army. There, over and over again, in the English Press reports, I noticed accounts of how batches of the Foreign Legion swam over the river into France and deserted.

It appears Franco didn't pay them. Which is not to be wondered at, seeing he has no money, poor chap. Also they got fed up with Franco. The Foreign Legion are pretty tough, but they do draw the line somewhere.

After all, no fighting man likes to feel that he's serving a rebel, or laying down his life in a bad cause.

The papers *said* at the time that the Foreign Legion was seething with discontent. That's months ago. It might at any moment go over to the Legitimate Government. I'm rather surprised they didn't. I wonder why they didn't? The Legitimate Government anyway had a hundred million out of the vaults of the Bank of Spain, which was enough to go on with. Perhaps the Legionaries didn't know that though. They do say the Soviet's sent in a pretty stiff bill for arms and personnel. There won't be much left when it's all over.

It's odd. The Bolshies always seem to be on the right side these days. On the side of law and order. I can't quite make this out. I've noticed it everywhere. They always are on *our* side. Or is it we on theirs?

They *used* to be Bolshies. But they seem a pretty sound lot now. I see that all the more recent mansion flats in Moscow are built with servants' bedrooms. Only the other day they shot a lot of Jews—Zinoviev was one of them—who wrote the treacherous letter stirring up trouble in Great Britain. They were shot for being Communists and plotting to set fire to the Kremlin I think it was. Sometimes I believe they imitate Hitler. But of course they're a pretty mild lot compared with that blood-thirsty ruffian, with his frog-marching and goose-stepping and his castor oil. A topsy-turvy world.

Of course the Russians have sent no volunteers to Spain. Mr. Roberts says: 'As to Russian infantry, I saw none, nor did I hear any report of such troops from journalists or other impartial and well-informed sources.'

I liked this 'other' of Mr. Roberts's. The indirect but

none the less graceful tribute to journalists, as 'impartial and well-informed', struck me as worthy of one of our legislators. The sort of thing you'd expect. It did him honour. And it conferred a well-merited meed of praise upon a hard-working and ill-remunerated class, with a high standard of professional integrity, who only too often are the objects of ill-natured and ungenerous attacks.

I have personally found the British journalist about as White a man as you could meet with. His impartiality is, indeed, proverbial. Is not, come to that, the great tradition of the British Press carried over into the B.B.C. which is to-day supplementing and in many cases supplanting the newspaper? And as to Mr. Roberts's phrase 'well-informed', I think it would be difficult anywhere in the world to find such well-informed organs of opinion as our great Government newspapers.

When I consider the benighted condition in which the population of Germany, or of Italy, lives, under the heel of a ruthless dictatorship, I shudder, and thank my stars that I was born an Englishman. It may sound pharisaical. But I can't help it. Why, the opposite number of *The Times* in Germany—the *Vossische Zeitung* I suppose—would probably only have a correspondent with the *rebel* army. You'd never hear the truth as we do, straight from the official spokesman of the Legitimate Government at Madrid. *The Times* just ignores Franco, and gets all its news from Madrid and Don Moses, which shows its impartiality.

Poor devils! Sometimes I think the Germans are more sinned against than sinning. *In spite of* the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other people to whose fairness and of course inside information I take off my hat. I think

they're a bit hard on old Fritz sometimes. He must have a pretty thin time, now we're squeezing him again with the economic boycott. Remember Geddes? 'We'll squeeze them till the pips squeak!' he said, when he was asked after the war if he was sure he was not going to be too *soft-hearted* with the Hun. A strong man that!—But I sometimes think a cleric, like our Primate, ought to show a sort of Christian spirit sometimes. You know what I mean. Good old-fashioned Christian. Well, like Christ!

Returning to Mr. Roberts, who at least on the negative side if no other is most valuable. He admits that there are Russians in the sky, if not on the ground. 'I,' he says, 'not alone amongst British M.P.s in Madrid, welcomed the appearance of those fast little hornets whenever they appeared high over Madrid.'¹ That is his way of referring to Russian fighter-planes, the little chaps who drove off Franco's slow and inefficient German bombers,² specially sent over to bomb the representatives of our Parliament. This shows the hatred this dictator fellow feels for the Mother of Parliaments whom he regards as responsible for the free parliamentary institutions of

¹ Tory M.P.s felt just the same as Mr. Roberts—it was a 'United Front' in the Puerta del Sol. It has been reported (by Mr. John Strachey) that a Tory M.P., when some aeroplanes appeared overhead and he espied the Hammer and Sickle painted on the wings, heaved a deep sigh of relief and exclaimed: 'Thank God, they're ours.'

² Inefficient like everything else German, thank goodness. I've just read to-day how all Hitler's new warships in Spanish waters are dropping to pieces. Faulty construction! Nazi warships and Nazi warplanes, both rotten. Not half as good as ours or the Russian. Poor old Hitler! Why we're so afraid of him I can't make out. The English papers say the German volunteers in Spain have proved very poor material. We shall beat Germany in the next war in a fortnight. Like all bullies Hitler is a coward. *And* inefficient.

Spain, Russia and the rest of the Democratic Countries.¹

As to the International Brigade, there are no Russians in it. They are mostly Spaniards, I gather. That must be why it is called 'international'. It's a joke I suppose. One of the rough jokes that men in the trenches make about each other.

Mr. Roberts says: 'We could not learn of Russians in the International Brigade—a corps the significance of which cannot be overstated. The Government has never lacked volunteers, but General Franco, even with some system of conscription, was held up at the Gates of Madrid by lack of men.'

This can only mean that the Government got all the volunteers it wanted for the International Brigade (and this of course must mean *Spanish* volunteers) so they didn't have to have an International Brigade after all. Or they only *called* it that, for fun.

'The Government had never lacked volunteers.'

This is just what the Germans and Italians say is so abominably unfair. But evidently these volunteers are Spanish all the time. So the Germans and the Italians are wrong, as usual. Sucks for them! Thank you, Mr. Roberts.

¹ I'm sorry, I've got this wrong. When the 'little hornets' appeared, the wicked Junkers 'speedily' made off. *Speedily*. I'm sorry. So it was cowardice and nothing else that caused them to fly away. They were actually *fast* machines. But they fled because they were *afraid*. I hope you'll excuse my slip.

THOUGHT FOUR

MORE 'GRIM ENTHUSIASM' ON
THE SPANISH FRONT

(Launcelot draws our attention to an offensive letter in a morning paper. In this letter France is accused of sending volunteers to Spain. This assertion Launcelot indignantly repudiates. He shows how France and Great Britain have loyally and honourably observed their undertakings to the Non-Intervention Committee, which they insisted on establishing. Other nations, that is the trouble, who do not possess the high civilized standards of France and England, fail to understand the idealism of France, let alone the high integrity and exemplary fairness of Great Britain. This Thought closes with a bit of 'grim enthusiasm' at Lora del Rio.)

THOUGHT FOUR

MORE 'GRIM ENTHUSIASM'
ON THE SPANISH FRONT

I'm going to go on thinking about Spain, in my dogged British way, until I've got to the bottom of it. There's some mystery about these Volunteers. I don't yet quite see daylight. I feel I'm groping in the dark.

Anyway Mr. Roberts in a simple sentence: 'The Government (of Madrid) has never lacked volunteers,' did dispose once and for all of the sort of stories that had been getting about. Even in our own papers there were some—not given prominence, I am glad to say, but there they were. One or two influential papers have even sunk so low as to print reports that the Volunteers in Spain were not *all* German or Italian.

I'm going to copy out a letter I found in the *Daily Telegraph*. I don't know why they publish such stuff. I suppose they think nobody takes any notice, so it doesn't do any harm.

I am happy to say this letter is not from an Englishman, but some species of foreigner, though he writes from an English address. Why do we allow these foreigners to live in England? Sometimes I think our tolerance goes too far.

From Prof. Sarolea

'SIR,

' A great deal has been written recently on the parti-

cipation of German and Italian troops in the Spanish civil war, but very little has been said, so far, about French participation.

'It is a fact, however, that recruiting has continued for many months on a very large scale all over France, and especially on the French-Spanish frontier. The city of Perpignan, with a population of 80,000, a quarter of whom are Spanish, is the chief centre of the Spanish recruiting agencies. The Town Council of Perpignan, with the apparent acquiescence of the Prefect, who is the representative of the French Government, has placed at the disposal of the Spanish recruiting committee a former military hospital.

'French volunteers are only allowed into Spain with a pass delivered by that committee. One observer tells in *Le Jour* that between November 19th and December 30th more than 15,000 volunteers crossed the Spanish frontier. The observer further states from his own careful calculations that an average of from 500 to 600 men leave Perpignan every day for Barcelona.

'The Barcelona recruiting bureau is not the only Spanish organization which is permitted by the French authorities. Another competent French eye-witness gives copious details in the *Petit Parisien* of the activities of the "Centro Español" of the P.O.U.M.—"Parti Ouvrier de l'Unité Marxiste"—which has established in Perpignan vast premises containing a theatre, a coffee-house, and an auditorium in which are held frequent propaganda mass meetings.

'Is it not relevant and permissible to enquire whether these persistent activities of mass recruiting and mass propaganda, which are carried on with the connivance and encouragement of the French authorities, can be

reconciled with the policy of non-intervention in the Spanish civil war of which it still proclaims itself the protagonist?

Yours faithfully,
G. SAROLEA.'

No, Mr. Sarolea, it is *not* either 'relevant or permissible.' And why the great newspaper to which you forwarded this misleading and provocative—er—effusion ever printed it I am at a loss to understand.

Five to six hundred French volunteers leave Perpignan every day for Barcelona! This is what the feller says. Over fifteen thousand are already fighting against Franco! And this is leaving out of count the thousands that were there *before*. For even the British papers (who had given proof of a high degree of caution where referring to foreign help for the Legitimate Government of Spain) agreed at the time that great numbers of French regular soldiers were defending San Sebastian and Irun against the Rebels. Fort Guadeloupe behind Irun was manned by French artillerymen they said. And all these troops went to the Saragossa front afterwards.

But in addition to all these the French papers themselves say that volunteers are leaving Paris and other recruiting centres all the time for Bilbao. That's at the other side of Spain, north of Oviedo. This is for a big offensive against Franco's rear.

It is only the Bolshe papers of the Right who say this, it is true. All the Bolshevists in France are on the Right. Where *we* are in fact, over in England. If we were in France the Carlton Club would be full of Bolsbies. All the *pukka sahibs* in France call themselves 'Left Wing' or communists. They will have their little joke, I suppose.

They're the Government of the Day. Blum, the Mr. Baldwin of France, is a millionaire. And he always salutes or says how-do-you-do with the Clenched Fist. It's a bit muddling.

But I must return to this Sarolea fellow. Does he understand what he is saying I wonder? Does he realize to what his alleged information leads? Does he begin to understand the full enormity of the perspective opened up by his reckless, irresponsible and unprincipled report?

France is our ally. An ally to be proud of. (Her stay-in strikes? A sign of her vitality, my dear sir! Her ninety recently elected communist deputies? A sign of her broad-mindedness and determination to give the devil his due!)

France is our ally, and, as this scurrilous correspondent remarks, she is the moving spirit in the Non-Intervention Agreement. Always has been. France is terribly keen on non-intervention. And we're with her there up to the hilt. If she had her way there would be absolutely *no* outside help of any sort for either side in Spain; and she has set a noble example of restraint and abnegation throughout this anxious period—during which Peace, so dear to all our hearts, has been incessantly threatened by Fascism.

The Non-Intervention Committee sits in London. But it was first asked for by France, and she wanted it to sit in Paris. We thought this was a bit too near to Spain. It might even have been bombed by one of Franco's Junkers. Besides, France, although as straight as a gun-barrel, has most unjustly not quite the same unassailable reputation for grim impartiality that we have. All things considered, we insisted upon London. As things have turned out it is perhaps just as well.

When France first insisted on having a Committee,

Italy and Germany refused to join, because they said *volunteers* ought to be banned too. Russia and France wouldn't hear of this. Admittedly it was difficult to see *why* France didn't want to have volunteers banned. And *of course* (as usual not understanding our ally's wonderful idealism) these dictator-countries suggested it might be because France might mean to help Caballero and Don Moses with volunteers. Typical wasn't it? These suspicious outsiders, who judge other people by themselves, never see the French point of view.

Then these same Fascist trouble-makers wanted to have *moral support* banned. This was too much. Neither France nor Russia, nor of course Great Britain, would have that. Monster meetings of sympathy with the *Frente Popular* were occurring all over Russia and France. In a free country like Russia you could not ban a meeting or suppress these spontaneous outbursts of warlike enthusiasm if you wanted to. But, of course, Italians and Germans don't understand freedom. And at that time the Press was still free in France so there was nothing to be done about that. M. Blum's own paper was the most irrepressible of the lot, and *roared* for assistance for the Legitimate Government of Spain every day.

As to us, it is unnecessary to say that no Englishman could possibly be restrained from giving his *moral* support to the side of a Legitimate Government, as against a mere Rebel and Outlaw like Franco, and it was no use pretending that he could.

But at last, in spite of every sort of ignoble obstruction, the *Non-Intervention Committee* with Lord Plymouth at its head came into being. No arms could be sent to Spain, though volunteers could go there—provided they were not Germans or Italians.

This was not put in that way. But it was of course *understood* that it was only France, Russia and Great Britain, the free countries, who were to send volunteers—since they had been the Powers who had insisted on volunteers being allowed. That was only logical.

All munitions of war were to be sent through another country, and not straight there. It looked better. For instance, a British bomber would go to Don Moses via France. Or a French siege-gun, say, via Mexico. It wouldn't really go to Mexico, but when it left Marseilles it would have *For Mexico* stuck on it, on a label on its barrel, or one of its wheels.

France and Great Britain have loyally observed the terms of the Non-Intervention Agreement, like honourable parties to an honourable undertaking. They have fulfilled scrupulously all the requirements of a Gentleman's Agreement, as was only to be expected of them. But I am sorry to say as regards Berlin and Rome it has been quite otherwise. Which, however, has surprised no one. Indeed we were rather astonished that they refrained from sending volunteers as long as they did, seeing that everybody else was doing so. And they after all make no pretence of being Gentlemen.

How our Government could ever have put their name to an instrument calling itself a 'Gentleman's Agreement' with Mussolini, as they did this Christmastime, baffles me. I suppose they felt that *they* were such great gentlemen that there was enough gentlemanliness for two. It can only be that.

At long last, finally out of patience (after a couple of weeks of rumours of Germans having landed in Spain), our Government has joined the Government of France—this happened only recently—in addressing a very grave

—not to say a little threatening—warning to Berlin. We made it pretty clear to the Germans that if they insolently persisted, in the teeth of our protests, in sending German volunteers to Spain, well, we should just have to take a very serious view of that provocative irresponsible behaviour on the part of the Berlin Government.

This being so, don't you see what it would mean, if what this Sarolea feller said were *true*? It would mean that the French Government were just about the biggest humbugs who had ever appeared on the international scene. And, what is more, our Government as well.

For it is hardly likely, to say the least of it, that what Professor Sarolea knows is not known to Mr. Eden and to Mr. Baldwin.

But it would mean more even than *humbug*. Far more. If there were any foundation in fact for what Professor Sarolea says, it would mean that the French Government (and the British) were so flagrantly, so openly, humbugging, as to have approached the borderline of lunacy—where 'humbugging' is no longer a mere sanctimonious deceit, but a reckless and savage buffoonery.

For consider what sort of duplicity is involved. To assert that something is *not* there which *is* there and, what is more, in full view of everyone present, what is that? It is like asserting that you are not there yourself to somebody to whom you are speaking. It is not so much *lying* as gibbering. Do you get me? It is a bit difficult to make this as clear as I should like. It is such a very peculiar—indeed I should say *impossible*—situation which I am trying to define.

But if such a rank and insane act of insolent deception, practised by a great civilized Government, could still be described as 'humbug', or as 'hypocrisy' (the good old

harmless words!) then it would be *us* (the people of England) that that government, or those governments, would be humbugging, not the Governments of Germany or Italy; who obviously would be as well aware as *they* were of what had been in progress. Through their Intelligence Services or from other sources they would know what was afoot. It would be the people of England who would be the ridiculous dupes.

It would be the Democracy—their *own* Democracies—for whose institutions they profess such a veneration, in which they take such a lyrical pride—that these governments would be brazenly fooling. But so *egregiously* fooling as to be acting as a madman acts, or some revolting buffoon, whose jokes were insane insults.

I hope I have made myself clear now. I'm afraid I've got a bit worked up about this. Underneath his external *sang froid* an Englishman is more inflammable than you'd think—especially when his moral nature is deeply stirred.

Something has just occurred to me. And I think I should mention it to you, for what it is worth, before I leave the subject.

When our Government always, I am happy to say, in agreement, in the fullest and most loyal fashion, with the French Government—indeed they act *together* invariably, just as if they had only one Foreign Office instead of two which is as it should be (this tends to get rid of all that 'sovereign state' rubbish with which Hitler is so fond of regaling us)—when I say, these two Governments address a note to Berlin or Rome, what happens?

For a long time now what has happened is this. The Note is duly delivered. It is often a very *grave* Note. More often than not. For these are very grave times. The

papers tell us it has gone, and a 'government spokesman' confirms it. The Note has reached its destination. Some times it is even a peremptory Note.

But both the governments to whom the Note has been addressed take no notice of it whatever. This is very singular. They proceed with their affairs just as if nothing had happened.

Some of these Notes—especially those in the form of questions, rather a favourite form of Note with our Government—have never been answered at all.

Now, all this passes off just as if our two Governments, the French and English, were in fact, and indeed known to be, not quite all there: or else were such untrustworthy, incredibly shift, hysterical *borderline cases* of Governments, that no sane or decent Administration could pay any attention to what they did or said.

It is, in short, *just as if* what Professor Sarolea says were *true*. And that in consequence the actions of our Governments were completely batty, or so supernaturally crooked, and so recklessly and malevolently insolent, as to amount to the same thing.

For obviously if France had been just pouring volunteers into Spain all along and Russia, her ally and ours, doing the same thing: if, as Ned insists is the case, there were an international army of fifty thousand men defending Madrid, and as many more on other fronts, in Cordoba province, Asturias, before Saragossa and so forth: why then the action taken by Great Britain and France over Christmas to compel Germany to stop sending volunteers to Spain to help Franco and to withdraw those she has already sent, would be fantastically arbitrary and unfair. It would be wellnigh laughably hypocritical, seeing the manner in which the demand

was conveyed to her. No British Government would lend itself to such a piece of contemptible buffoonery.

It might say to Germany: 'We do not wish to see your volunteers in Spain helping Franco, whom we regard with disfavour. We prefer Communism. To help Franco conflicts with British interests. This is to warn you that if you continue to do so we shall stop your transports with our Fleet and sink your warships if they try and protect your transports.' That is how a White Man speaks. That is how we should speak.

There is the Nelson touch. But it is inconceivable that we should speak like some half-crazed bagman, exploding into a torrent of bluff and bombast, which he scarcely expects will take in even the stupidest of his rustic clients. That is impossible. Impossible for the Governments of two of the most civilized powers in the world, to conduct themselves as if they were the scarecrow-envoys of some ramshackle Black Republic, rotting in the tropics; or a couple of comic turns in a political pantomime in Paris, snivelling and squinting over the footlights, to the delight of a cynical audience of frivolous Frogs.

This is so utterly impossible that we must dismiss it at once. Therefore when I read as I did this morning that among the olive groves near Villa del Rio in the South of Spain numbers of corpses were identified by the Rebels, after a battle, as French, Czechoslovak, and Russian, I just laugh to myself. These are the sort of falsehoods that are put out and that gain currency during any war.

It is always the side that is in the wrong that invents these ridiculous tales. Never the side that is in the right. Englishmen have never descended to untruths of this sort, I am glad to say. But the sort of people we are dealing with can be gauged by tuning in to Seville and

listening to General Queipo de Llano doing his evening broadcast for the Rebels.

The other night, for instance, when he said good night he added as he was fading out '*Basta—me voy a encontrarme con la Passionaria*' which is to say: 'Well, good night folks—I'm going off now to keep a date with the *Passionaria*.'

That noble woman whose grim enthusiasm (to use Mr. Roberts's words) has been an inspiration to so many Britons of recent months needs no introduction from me. Nor do I need to say what were the feelings of a British listener-in when this vulgar brigand at Seville shot at us over the ether this unseemly *good night*.

You will, I think, agree that it would be difficult to imagine any of the gentlemen employed as Announcers by the British Broadcasting Corporation—even the one who has just a suspicion of a North Country accent—misconducting himself in that way at the microphone. In a man who lowers himself so far as to indulge in such pleasantries, little confidence can be placed. He is obviously as irresponsible as he is lost to all sense of decency. Anything he says is a hundred per cent suspect.

In view of this it is all the more remarkable that the Rebel radio-news is unquestionably more reliable than that from the Government side. So I have often been compelled to recognize. If I have read once I have read a dozen times that Oviedo has fallen. And as to Huesca, which has been besieged for six months by the Catalans, it is amazing how often it has been occupied by their troops, only to be apparently handed back again next day. Just for the sake of taking it all over again—on the radio. I suppose that's it. Whereas Franco does not usually say he has got a town until he has. This may be, in spite of himself, the result of his military training. For he is

after all a soldier. Or it may be that he hopes by these means to throw dust in our eyes, by always being truthful, and so make us forget that he is an outlaw.

This Thought and Thought Three has got in a jam a bit with other Thoughts, though I meant it to be mainly about *grim enthusiasm* displayed by the loyal citizens in response to the appeal to law and order of the Legitimate Government. I'm afraid that a certain amount of grim enthusiasm on the part of *other* Legitimate Governments (such as that of our ally France) has got into this Thought somehow.

It has struck me also that I ought to justify the title of my Thought, as that applies to Spain alone. So I append an account of what happened in Lora del Rio. It's from the Official Report of the grim enthusiasm shown by the local Soviets in Southern Spain, in the early days of Franco's rebelliousness.

IX. LORA DEL RIO (Province of Seville)

'The village had been quite calm until the arrival of the revolutionaries in flight from Carmona and La Campana. This influx swelled the revolutionary elements in Lora who, on July 23rd, declared a Communist State, and celebrated the occasion by burning the churches and imprisoning the archpriest, the Very Rev. Father Francisco Arias Rivas, and the ecclesiastical notary, Father Juan Coca. They also destroyed the statue of the Patroness of Lora del Rio, Our Lady of Setefilla, a great centre of local veneration.

'The local contingent of the Civil Guard had been dismissed by orders of its captain, Martin Calero, who had also rounded up arms from all the anti-Communist

organizations and residents. The revolutionaries were thus able to gain entire control of the place without resistance. The local Soviet, however, summoned Martin Calero to the municipal offices and shot him out of hand.

'It is impossible in this short preliminary report to describe in full detail all the atrocities committed in Lora. Many families had all their menfolk rounded up, and in most cases they were killed after revolting tortures. Cartloads of these wretched victims were taken at dawn to the cemetery, where they were made to dig a huge grave. Then the murderers fired on them, but they were careful to shoot them in the legs, so that they were not killed outright but fell writhing into the grave. Some were then buried alive and others left to linger in agony on the ground, where their cries and groans made the days and nights hideous, as they slowly died. The people living in the immediate neighbourhood, threatened with death themselves if they went to the aid of these unfortunate creatures, fled from their homes rather than endure these ghastly sights and sounds. Many of them have provided irrefutable evidence of these horrors, evidence grimly confirmed by the subsequent discovery of bodies with clenched hands protruding from the earth, and other cases where the wounded man had, by a supreme effort, managed to get his head above ground, and then could do no more.

'When the revolutionaries committed these murders, they always took with them two prisoners from among those remaining in the prison as witnesses. These latter were then sent back to the prison with promises that their lives would be spared, and thus arousing hopes which the passing of a few days always proved to be false.

Where, as in many cases entire families were in prison, the usual procedure was to shoot one member of the family each day, starting with the sons and finishing with the father, in order to give the maximum of mental anguish in addition to physical torture.

'Of the 28 Civil Guards, only 8 have survived. They pierced the eyes of one of them, Augustin Menacho, with a needle, and then shot him. The total number of anti-Communists and Civil Guards killed in Lora del Rio was 138.

'These facts have been gathered from the statements of a number of responsible witnesses who were present at the events described. Among them is the magistrate of Lora del Rio, Don Eugenio Pico Martin, who was arrested during the first few days of the revolutionary occupation, but was later set free on condition that he reported daily to the Soviet. Another is one of the surviving Civil Guards of Lora, Cristobal Calvante Granados. A third is Don Jose Maria Linan, local leader of the Spanish Phalanx. He was taken prisoner from the beginning of the upheaval and was to have been shot on the night of the day when the Nationalist troops arrived to liberate the village.'

For sheer grimness of concentrated enthusiasm that takes a bit of beating: especially where some of the wretched rebels had succeeded in driving their fists up through the earth, or where that wounded feller had just managed to poke his head out and take a look round before he passed out. The 'grim enthusiasm' claimed by Mr. Wilfred Roberts to be such a characteristic feature of the Legitimate Government of democratic Spain is visible in this account of events at Lora del Rio I think. In his article in the *Manchester Guardian* Mr. Wilfred

Roberts, M.P. did not quite succeed in conveying the feel of it.

POSTSCRIPT

I showed this to Ned. He laughed as usual. He said that in this Thought the battle which he insists is taking place between my Conscious and my Unconscious Mind went all in favour of the Conscious. He said there was only one stand made by the dark forces of Unreason. Those were his words.

It is his way of course of referring to my Unconscious. He calls my Thinking Aloud the dance of the Dark Forces of Unreason, seen through the smoke-screen of Baldwinian politics and the Popular Front Parsonics of the B.B.C. Where I showed what must follow if Sarolea's letter were true, that was where the Dark Forces threatened to break through.

Ned proceeded to say (I half expected it) that of course every word of Professor Sarolea's letter was true. He had had a talk in our club with a feller who travels in laundry machinery who had been in Perpignan lately. He'd given Ned a lot more facts. This made me see red. I said I'd have him turned out of the club for taking money from Rebels. However hard it is to pay the club fees, and I find it hard enough, he shouldn't do that. Ned told me not to be a fool: that the laundry-machinery wallah was not an agent of anybody except the machinery-people.

'Revolted buffoons, whose jokes were insults.' He quoted what I'd written. That exactly described the case, said Ned. That was my Unconscious taking a hand, according to old Ned, and using its eyes where my Conscious was all the time in B.B.C. blinkers.

My Unconscious *almost* broke through there, according

to him. Like the face of the wounded man who stuck his head up through the earth, out of the grave. It almost, but *not quite*, flooded my upper-mind with blinding light. Then the B.B.C. stepped in and 'microphoned it all out smooth again' (Ned's words) and stamped flat the heaving surface of the subterranean mind.

What fun if it had, thought I. And I'm determined next time to see if I can't make it do what Ned said it *almost* did.

One of these fine days, he went on, I should get the shock of my life, if I persevered with this experiment. The blinkers *would* drop off my eyes. Instead of seeing things through a glass darkly I should see them face to face. Then I should see the 'reckless and savage buffoons' who had made me what I am.

I did not ask him what I *was*. It would, I am sure, have been extremely uncomplimentary. But I was thrilled at it I confess. For some moments I was silent. Ned had impressed me definitely. What he seems to think about my Unconscious I've always felt myself. I know you'll think it silly, but I was kind of flattered. Ned is pretty quick on the uptake and he saw at once that I was kind of pleased. So he pressed home his advantage.

He said I was an almost *perfect* moron. What the transparently insincere mouthings, screechings and hissings of the democratic machinery (of Press, Church, Radio, Pictures, etc.) would make of a man, if one existed, who was the perfectly responsive democratic instrument—that was *me*. I grinned. I took all this on the chin. I said thank you very much, and waited for more.

I can take my medicine, I flatter myself, as well as any man. Look at the way the British public took the funding of the American Debt! It is pretty wonderful the way

they stand up to taxation. No other country would do it. It makes me rather proud of being an Englishman when I reflect that the Englishman is more heavily taxed than any other man alive. He complained when they sent him in the bill for the War? Not him! His Government knew that they were dealing with a good sport when they asked him to shoulder that packet. And he has not failed them. A wry smile! A few bars of *What's the use of worrying!* And that was all. It's the English way.

To win the war we had to borrow a thousand million pounds from the United States, on the most bitterly usurious terms. Really awful terms. Did we flinch? I don't think it can be said that we did. As a matter of fact most of us didn't know we were doing it. It was all done for us. Our standard of living will be lower for generations. Our Government explained that to us. Did we protest? Not us. We took it on the chin. We don't whine, nor yet go off the deep end. We can take our medicine.

Then when we went back on the Gold Standard. That was a pretty grim business. We'd been getting on quite nicely with our Bradburys but we had to face up to it, and those who asked it of us knew we would not fail them. We went back on to Gold, and of course, our commerce languished and our streets were stiff with beggars. Did we grumble? Not us. It's not the British way. And when we lost our King so suddenly, did we show our grit? The world was amazed at the grit we showed. We were amazed ourselves. And all the Government papers told us that they hadn't thought we had so much grit.

Well, I took my medicine from old Ned, with a grin. I grinned and bore it and I waited for more. But he was through. He'd socked me enough he thought, I suppose.

'Launce,' he said, 'you've got some grit somewhere. You never show it. But I know you've got it old man. That's why I like you.' 'Ned,' said I (I felt a bit sheepish) 'you show your grit plain enough boy! But I like you all the same!' 'Launcelot,' he fixed me with his eye. 'One day Launcelot you'll know what I mean. You've got a great man down there working for you in your basement. Some day you'll come to me, look me straight in the eye, and tell me what's what. I prophesy here and now that you will wake up with a start. And just like Balaam's ass we shall all be astounded at the words that will come out of your mouth.' 'Take care Ned I don't use my heels as well and kick you in the pants!' 'You won't do that Launce,' he said. 'Why should you? Once your Unconscious has taken charge and made a new man of you you won't want to do that.' 'You think I shall approve of you Ned, when the great change has come?' 'Neither approve nor disapprove, my dear old drumstick. We shall be able to converse sensibly together that is all. Neither of us will experience any desire to kick the other in the pants. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner!*' 'But shall I be so unfathomably wise?' 'Launce my lad, you'll just be like me, a chap with a turn for common sense, and very suspicious of all fine words and beautiful phrases, whether they come from soap boxes, pulpits, editorial chairs, wooolsacks, thrones, or wireless sets. Whether from Moscow or Mayfair.' 'But Ned, if I'm so suspicious then, shall I believe any longer in you?' 'Yes Launce, and for the best of all reasons, because you will be able to see through me, and you will find that I am made of good solid stuff.' 'But tell me Ned, what shall I do to arrive at this beatific state?' 'It will probably come quite suddenly,' he said. 'I notice that your Unconscious displays a maximum activity and power

when you are suffering from some emotional shock. For instance, the abdication of the King aroused all your latent snobbery and you reacted at once. You remember? I thought for a moment there was going to be a breakthrough! 'You did?' 'That was my impression. People who have been blind since birth—and you exactly answer to the description—sometimes if they fall down-stairs or are blown up by a bomb, recover their sight, or rather become possessed of it.' 'But must I be blown up Ned in order to get a little common sense?' 'It will have to be a pretty hefty bomb too I'm thinking. Yes, Launce, you will have to have a bad shock. Can't you fall in love?' 'I might do that Ned. But supposing it was happy love?' 'There is that. No, I don't know what it will be. You've been near it once or twice.' 'I suppose my British grit got in the way?' 'Very likely,' Ned agreed. 'You do keep a damn stiff upper lip.' 'It must be that. Well we must just wait for some cataclysm. Meanwhile, how about another?' And I rang the bell for the waiter. I felt the vision fading, and I fell back upon a highball.

THOUGHT FIVE

MADAME TABOUIIS AND PERTINAX

(Launcelot goes over the top. He resolves to penetrate the smoke-screen that obscures the 'Right' from the 'Left', and vice versa. He analyses, with the help of Ned as usual, 'Madame Tabouis' and 'Pertinax'. Ned tells him that Madame Tabouis is in close touch with Soviet interests. He ventures to deduce that when the papers say: 'Paris is indignant', it really means that the Soviet is indignant: since it is always Madame Tabouis who is quoted, for 'French' opinion.)

THOUGHT FIVE

MADAME TABOUIS AND
PERTINAX

I'm sorry to have to use a rather long word, but I have been trying to get down to *fundamentals*.

Spain! What a puzzle it is! I know that there's *something* about what's going on there that I haven't grasped. I will do my best in this Thought to pierce through the cloud of war to the heart of the mystery.

If I were in Parliament I feel I should go far, and it is by no means impossible that I shall yet come to write M.P. after my name. The happy phrase, if not the *mot juste*, seldom fails me. But to return to the Cloud of War.

The key to the mystery, I can't help feeling, is Don Moses. Why I don't know. I just have a hunch. And as to the cloud of war, by that I suppose I really mean the *cloud of words*. Most of the clouds in this life come from words. I mean the smoke-screen of vocables, that must be it, discharged by Reuter, the British United Press and so on, morning and evening.

I feel as if I were a soldier. I am peering through a dense cloud of smoke in no-man's-land. 'No-man's-land' is a good name for what the Cloud of Words hangs over! —It's like a dream. I don't know *why* I am here, in the

middle of the smoke-cloud. But I sort of want to find out what they are hiding-up by means of all this impenetrable veil of words.

I think I will go over the top—all by myself. I will see what I can find out.

Perhaps this is a V.C. show after all! I feel terribly military. I always think the bravest actions are performed in the closet. The arm-chair I mean.

I heard a newsboy crying out his evening paper. 'Paris asks if England' was all I could hear. Paris is always *asking*. However I rushed out and bought the three evening papers and went back into my club. There hurriedly I read the news from Paris (which was very grave—the French were evidently in a great state of mind) in the first paper I had opened. Then I turned to the second. It said exactly the same thing as the first. Same words, in fact. Then I turned to the third paper. Same thing. Same words.

This was a bit monotonous. I wished I'd bought only one, for all I wanted to read was what Paris was asking.

I turned back to the first paper. At the bottom of the column telling the alarming news from the French capital I saw the words *Reuter* or *British United Press*, I forget which. And the longest of the extracts quoted (it was the Press apparently that was so alarmed, not the population of Paris exactly) was headed 'Madame Tabouis writes'.

Now I had seen 'Madame Tabouis writes' before, I remembered. I looked at the next paragraph, below that devoted to Madame Tabouis's sayings, and I saw '*Pertinax*, writing in the *Echo de Paris*'.

Yes, '*Pertinax*' and 'Madame Tabouis' were two names I dimly recalled as having seen before, not once but on

many occasions.¹ They had always been together. 'Madame Tabouis' was always followed by 'Pertinax', for some reason, in the news from Paris, whenever the French capital was particularly disturbed. And I recalled that once this lady with the rather Maupassanty sort of name had alarmed me so much about Hitler that I had walked round to Heppels in Piccadilly and asked if any gas-masks were on sale. They looked surprised. It is astonishing how unsusceptible *Hoi Poloi*², are to the kind of stimulus provided by Madame Tabouis.

So when the damp and foggy streets of London are shaken by a dismal wintry cry, rising from the hoarse throat of a scurrying newsvendor, to the effect that *Paris* is in a state of high excitement, it is, first and foremost, *Madame Tabouis who is excited*. And almost invariably she is accompanied by somebody called 'Pertinax'. 'Pertinax' by himself wouldn't cut much ice. But it's like a cocktail—bracket him with Madame Tabouis and he makes a pretty potent appeal to the international palate.

But the name 'Madame Tabouis' rang a bell. In what connection had I heard that name? And then I smiled. For in my memory I heard old Ned's voice. He'd explained to me that all political journalists represent the views of some particular politician, or some particular political interest. They have to, in a sense, since that's the only way they can get inside news quicker than their colleagues. It has a *cachet*, too, that way. For instance, a certain able publicist in a big Sunday newspaper is the recognized spokesman for our future P.M.—Now Madame

¹ 'Pertinax and Mme. Tabouis, the best-informed political writers in Paris.'—*Sunday Referee*, February 7th, 1937.

² *Sic* throughout (see footnote p. 96).

Tabouis is generally supposed to be the mouthpiece of Soviet diplomacy in the French capital.

If this is true, no wonder that her news is pretty potent and worth listening to, and, of course, just a shade *red*, or a good steady hectic pink.

So how does this work out? Let us see. (1) Madame Tabouis is very disagreeably stimulated by some information she receives from Soviet circles in Paris. (2) She expresses her painful excitement in an article in her paper *L'Oeuvre*. (3) A news agency is very (disagreeably) stimulated to an alarmist *degrée* by what it reads. It translates what it has read. It telegraphs it to London. (4) The London evening papers are very (disagreeably) stimulated by the shocking news they have received from the news agency, in whom they place implicit confidence. (5) They all receive *the same* (disagreeably stimulating) 'news'. (6) Large posters are rapidly printed. (7) They do not say 'Madame Tabouis' very alarmed, but *Paris* very alarmed, naturally. (8) The newsvendor is very stimulated by the poster. He opens his mouth very wide. He bellows 'Paris very alarmed!' (9) In my club I hear his cry. I am startled. I rush out. (10) I hastily 'scan the news'. (11) My alarm was apparently justified. Paris is in a turmoil. The situation is very grave!

Here is the sequence. Above, simplified, is the chain of cause and effect. But several important factors have been left out.

First of all—*Who* is the 'British United Press'? *Who* is 'Reuter'? I know who the *Evening Standard* is. It is of course Lord Beaverbrook. The *Daily Mail* has for me an identity. It is Lord Rothermere. Even the Gaumont-British has a name for me, the name of

Ostrer. (It has the same name as the *Sunday Referee*.)

But the 'British United Press' has no name for me. It is an 'Agency'. It is an 'It'. It collects news. Upon what principle, political or other, it works, I do not know. What systems it favours, what 'news' it collects as important, and what it neglects as unimportant, of that I am unaware. That it is *selective*, even highly selective, is obvious. For there is a great deal of news flying about every day which it could collect, if it wanted to, but which it does not. It does not consider it 'important'.

That it considers 'Madame Tabouis' important, even supremely important, is plain enough. For invariably it quotes her. Perhaps it has heard what Ned has heard, that this lady is in close touch with the Soviet interests in Paris. That, of course, would make her a particularly reliable source of information: an infallible index of Parisian public opinion. But what *it* is—I mean this jolly old Agency—I'm damned if I can guess.

Yet it is awfully important. The evening papers, which influence opinion if anything more than the morning papers (most people haven't the time to read the morning papers) consist on the political side of nothing but this standardized 'news', reaching them through these agencies. At least to all foreign news this may be said to apply. So, from this standpoint, and leaving out of count the leading articles (which are only read by rather brainy people) it is the news agencies much more than the newspapers that form that mysterious thing we call Public Opinion.

As to Home News, covering the same subject-matter as 'Madame Tabouis' (often under the heading 'Our Political Correspondent') I know where that comes from.

A reporter fellow told me all about that. The evening and morning newspapers send people round every morning and evening to the Foreign Office. And the Foreign Office tells them what it knows, or what it thinks is good for them to know. They don't see Mr. Eden of course. He would only see an Archbishop or a man of high rank. They see a Mr. X. They say: 'Good morning Mr. X. What's happening to poor old Franco? Any news?' Mr. X gravely shakes his head. 'Still a stalemate I suppose Mr. X? His prospects are none too good!' And Mr. X tells them what His Majesty's Government's 'news' is from the various disturbed areas of the world's surface. And it also suggests what attitude it considers desirable that the public should adopt, regarding this war or that war; or this Rumour of War, or that Threat to Indivisible Peace. And the papers more or less faithfully reflect the attitude of His Majesty's Government, adding a few bits of their own.

There are, of course, the Foreign Correspondents. When there are disturbances, like the civil war in Spain, they send special news-hawks to the scene of the conflict. These news-hawks naturally pick and choose their 'news', just like the big agencies. The 'news' for instance from the seat of war can scarcely tell a different story from the Editorials—it must conform to the policy of the paper.

So far so good. Already I have analysed, I find, *the nature*, at least, of this smoke-screen I am in the middle of; through which I am so intently peering and prying. That's half the battle. To secure the munitions secrets of your enemy is a great thing. I know of what substance the smoke-screen is composed. Or I know *where*, if not quite how, it is manufactured.

But why should it be so opaque? Why indeed should there be a smoke-screen at all? In the case of the civil war in Spain, at first sight it is not easy to see why our public should be misinformed.

One reason for the *opacity* seems to be this. All the 'news' comes from one side, or most of it. There is a settled policy here, though who dictates the policy I do not know. However, it is unnecessary to enquire into that. For no British institution (such as the British United Press) would *really* listen much whatever happened to anyone except the Legitimate Government. And so in Spain what it amounts to is this: the majority of the 'news' we get comes from Don Moses.

From Don Moses, I say, in order to simplify. You will remember that Mr. Garvin said that Don Moses is 'the real master of the camarilla called the "Spanish Government"'. And that is good enough for me. Mr. Garvin is one of my gods.

Just as ninety per cent of the most sensational stuff that comes from Paris comes from the Soviet Envoy in Paris (via Madame Tabouis) so ninety per cent of the Spanish dope comes from Don Moses.

This is as it should be. But of course this *does* account for the smoke-screen effect. For you don't hear, or hear properly, what the *other side* are doing. There is, as it were, a wall of smoke between. As you do not hear, so you do not *see*. In the British Cinema, as in the official British Press, you get the same smoke-screen effect. I refer to the News shown on the screen in the Cine-Theatres.

The Gaumont-British News Reel shows you almost invariably the 'Red Militia', as Lord Rothermere would call it. Mr. Ostrer is more patriotic than Lord Rothermere. It is truly British to confine yourself as he does to

the side of Law and Order. And there's no question on which side is the *right* and who has the better claim to represent the Spanish people. Mr. Ostrer sees this, more honour to him. Lord Rothermere does not. The latter gentleman, for some reason best known to himself, calls Don Moses 'a Red'. *Daily Mail* sensationalism I call it. 'Red' indeed!

Well here I am peering about in no-man's-land. At least I have come to recognize one thing. I realize *which side I am on*, so to speak; or rather whose trenches I have come out of, in order to conduct a little private investigation of my own: namely those of the Legitimists. So my Fifth Thought is just the first step in a reconnaissance.

THOUGHT SIX

WHAT 'PARIS' AND 'LONDON'
THINK

(Under the influence of Ned, Launcelot, in his dogged British way, forges ahead. 'The *Paris* and *London* of the newspaper-poster is frankly a literary, or a verbal abstraction,' he asserts: quoting Ned, we suspect. There is an abstract world, that of the political cartoon, beside the real one. But Launcelot decides that everything is for the best in the best of all Tory worlds, that Mr. Baldwin is leading M. Blum up the garden, and 'dishing the Socialists', and that even if Mr. Baldwin placed himself at the head of the Communist Party, as he has put himself at the side of Soviet Russia, it would all be a trick and a damned clever one, to make the world safe for the clubman.)

THOUGHT SIX

WHAT 'PARIS' AND 'LONDON'
THINK

I MUST get to learn a bit more about this confounded smoke-screen. I am in a sense more in the dark than ever. But I've made some cuttings as I said from newspapers and here's one I've got from an evening paper of *January 7th* which is a good specimen. I think I'll stick it in here and pore over it like a cross-word, or as if I was one of those fellers who go butterfly-catching and pin down their pretty discoveries.

'BRITISH REACTION TO LANDING OF ITALIAN VOLUNTEERS

'The British reaction to the landing of 10,000 Italian volunteers in Spain within a few days of the Anglo-Italian declaration, has been "very strong indeed", according to Paris comment to-day.

'"Pertinax" in the *Echo de Paris*, says:

'"The Foreign Office consider that the 'gentleman's agreement' has been violated in the spirit, and doubt the value of that instrument."

'Writing in *L'Œuvre*, Mme. Tabouis declares that "although Mr. Eden did not conceal from M. Corbin (the French Ambassador) his great annoyance at having been 'tricked' by Mussolini, it seems that for some time to come England will continue to watch the turn of events.

"The colossal bad faith which Fascist Italy has shown at the very moment of the so-called 'gentleman's agreement' has deeply moved all shades of British opinion and has placed Mr. Eden in a very difficult position," writes the *Populaire*.

'Pertinax' comes first here. It is generally the other way round. ('Pertinax' is just the *Morning Post*, only *really* broad minded.) But you can see the smart team-work about which I was talking.

We hear in London, from Paris—from Madame Tabouis and M. Blum (his paper is the *Populaire*)—what London is thinking. 'London' doesn't tell us what London is thinking. It sees itself in the mirror of Paris. We have no Madame Tabouis here. When I saw 'British Reaction' etc. I was all steamed up because I wanted to hear what the British Reaction was. I hadn't seen *any* reaction. So I wanted to find out.

'All shades of British Opinion' had been 'deeply moved' by the landing of Italian volunteers. My 'shade' hadn't been moved at all. My club was as quiet as the grave: and the street outside was depressingly 'normal'.

Everyone was distinctly relieved that the Abyssinian muddle had been liquidated and that Mussolini consented to act *like* a gentleman even if he isn't one, and sign a gentleman's agreement. That was all.

But I must analyse a bit more thoroughly, I can see, the composition of this smoke-screen. The tiny particles of which it is made up turn out to be *words*—billions and billions of little black letters like the ones I am using here.

Now what *we* know and what *Hoi Poloi* doesn't know, is that there is no such thing as a 'British Reaction'. There is no such thing as 'London' or 'Paris' or anything

of that. It is just a lot of words. It is part of the stock-in-trade of the art of government. Of democratic government, that is understood. These are our *properties*.

'Paris' (in such a phrase as 'Paris comment to-day') does not mean the great city that we all know, full of Frogs and beautiful Parisiennes. 'Paris takes a grave view' does not mean that the miscellaneous millions of Paris take a grave view. Or any other view. They, like us, have other things to think about. They are fully occupied cheating each other out of two francs forty centimes, or a million francs, as the case may be—selling sugar and butter, and of course snails and frogs; amputating legs, cleaning out the *égouts*, putting fresh washers on taps, making Spring Hats for Débutantes, and bringing round the milk bottles and removing yesterday's trash-bins.

I am, of course, now speaking in confidence. The 'Paris' and 'London' of the newspaper-poster is frankly a literary, or a verbal, abstraction. An abstract world exists beside the real one. It is like a brilliantly lighted stage. (We are all in shadow. We are the passive spectators.) *Madame Tabouis* is one of the principal performers in this abstract ballet of high politics. And she does certainly give us a nasty little thrill from time to time by her tricky little screams, bless her little heart.

The personnel is by no means a large one. We, the great masses of 'listeners-in' or of lookers-on, take no part in this performance whatever. We are *supposed* to. That is another matter. *Madame Tabouis* is for instance symbolic. She *stands for* the great silent masses of Paris. She is a 'symbol'. She speaks for 'Paris' with as much justification as a matter of fact as I might speak for the moon, or for the inhabitants of Sirius.

Madame Tabouis does not consult the people of Paris. She consults the Russian Soviet Envoy instead. And of course (entirely *entre nous*) the Russian Soviet Envoy does not consult the people of Russia, or any other 'People'.

Stalin isn't *really* any more democratic than we are. (You must keep this under your hat.) He does not consult the 170 million Russians when he wants to blow his nose—or blow Franco's nose, or pull a long nose at Hitler. When you read that 'Russian Opinion is deeply moved', or 'Russia in a ferment', you'd be a goose to suppose that it means *literally* what it says. The words represent symbolic actions, taking place upon the boards of this little brilliantly lit abstract theatre. It is the figure styled 'Russia' *there* that is 'deeply moved', or is pretending to be. The cartoonish mountebank standing for 'Russia' is affecting great emotional strain. That is all. Nothing more.

Of course in so far as people attend to this performance which is always going on upon this little stage (and you would be surprised how few of them do pay any attention) they are only 'moved' or 'alarmed' up to a point. But Paris or London (I mean the *real* cities, not the fictitious newspaper ones) get alarmed *after* Madame Tabouis has got alarmed. And when you see that 'a quieter tone prevails in Paris', all it means is that the little figure upon the floodlit stage, 'Madame Tabouis' (she doesn't sound real, does she?) is behaving more quietly. She is showing less agitation. Hitler is frightening her less. Or Mussolini, with his 'Gentleman's Agreement' tucked truculently under his arm, has been grinning at her cynically for some time, and excited her very much: but *now* he has left off. She is quieter. That is the meaning of the words.

But 'France', and of course 'Great Britain', are *other* fictitious characters upon this little proscenium at which we are all looking, with more or less attention. 'France' and 'Great Britain' are likewise counters, merely; or they are marionettes in the non-stop performance. They do not represent any concrete reality, in anything but the most remote and distorted sense. They are at the best inept caricatures of what is a great reality. A great reality which is at the mercy of an inept caricature of itself!—It sounds a bit grim, but *voilà!* as Madame Tabouis would say, with a pretty French shrug, no doubt.

We of course do *see* the puppets. 'France' or 'Great Britain'. But we do not see the wires by means of which they are manipulated. Nor do we see the people, the handful of busy operators who pull the wires and make the figures gesticulate and mouth, often in such a peculiar manner.

As an instance of this, we *see* Madame Tabouis. We see her name every morning and every night in the newspapers. We do not see the Soviet diplomatic interests of Paris, upon which she is said to depend for her political sensations. But in their turn the Soviet representatives in Paris are only mouthpieces, not the great Source itself. Who or what may that be? Ultimately, I should not be surprised, some little financier squatting in a New York office.

I'm afraid I have in this Thought gone a bit too far. But after all I am not writing these papers for *Hoi Poloi* am I? And what I have been saying is common ground with every 'Clubman', as the cads across the Herring Pond insist on calling us.

Look here, while we're about it we might as well admit that the precious 'democracy' we're always talk-

ing about is entirely bogus. It's another of those papier-mâché symbolical oddities I've been gassing about up above.

Old Ned is a lamb. He's very simple in some ways, though he's very smart in others. He would say that something ought to be done about the situation I have just been led to describe (the analysis of the 'smoke-screen'). He'd say we were all being badly fooled. I know he would say that it affected *me* as much as anyone else, if not more. One day I'd find myself in the gutter, if I wasn't shot up against a wall. He argues that *we*, nowadays, are as much *Hoi Poloi* as anyone else. He has often shouted at me that when Democracy is flouted, or the people led by the nose, that *we are in it*. Our class is as much the potential victim as any other.

He, of course, is mad. He always was unbalanced. The Government of the day knows jolly well what it's about. We can leave it to them. When Mr. Baldwin talks about 'democracy' he knows what he's doing. He's leading Blum up the garden. Where our forefathers 'dished the Whigs', we 'dish' the beastly Socialists every time. And Mr. Baldwin's the man to do it. He's working for *us*. And all the while the Socialists think he's working for *them*.

When I say this to Ned, he says it's the other way round. That I am the fool in this combination: that I am persuaded he's working for me, whereas in reality he's working for the other lot. But that is lunacy. Why should he fool *me*?

Why, if Baldwin gave the clenched fist salute of the Marxists, in salutation to Blum, and Blum gave it back to him, I should still know that he was playing a part, and playing it damn well. I should never doubt that

he ~~was~~ just leading them up the garden. It's me and my lot he's working for. After all he's one of us. Disraeli is his master, as we know. And he's brought to a fine art the hoisting of the Reds with their own petard. If he put himself at the head of the Communist Party I should follow him. I should wink at old Ned and drag him along to vote Bolshie!

I can just see Ned's face if that happened! A dangerous game, he thinks it already. But Baldwin is as deep as they make 'em. Look how he kept our Embassy open in Madrid, pretending to back up the Legitimate Government there, while thousands of well-to-do people, among them Admirals, Generals and Dukes, were being executed every day! That was pretty courageous! It enraged old Ned. But they were only *Spanish* Dukes and Generals. Ned couldn't see that. In some ways Ned is very dense.

THOUGHT SEVEN

THE 'MAD DOG OF EUROPE'S'
DESIGNS OVER THE CHRIST-
MAS HOLIDAYS

(Christmas was a very dark period for Launcelot. Hitler, without any butter, and with only guns of a laughably poor quality—owing to the fact that he could obtain no raw material because of our boycott and blockade—was reported to be about to 'break prison'. He was expected to rush out of Germany, while all decent people were eating their Christmas puddings, and seize Spain, Danzig, Czechoslovakia, and the Ukraine. But we kept the watch on the Rhine, and he thought better of it. Will he be more successful during the Coronation festivities? Should we not cancel these celebrations, in view of the danger?)

THOUGHT SEVEN

THE 'MAD DOG OF EUROPE'S'
DESIGNS OVER THE CHRISTMAS
HOLIDAYS

THE Christmas Eve Press offensive needed a bit of understanding. But bearing in mind what I was saying in my last Thought about Madame Tabouis, it's not very difficult. But let's get down to it.

First, after Christmas came the news of the ten thousand Italian volunteers. Madame Tabouis was 'deeply moved' as usual, and considered it was 'very grave indeed'. And our papers told us that *we* were very much 'moved' as well. We 'took a very grave view of it.'

Now as to those Italian volunteers, and such copious numbers of them, there *was* some slight surprise. I was surprised myself, for a moment. Then I smiled to myself. I saw the *jeu*.

The reason for this surprise was that a couple of weeks prior to the news that 10,000 Italians had landed at Cadiz we had been told in all the English newspapers that the *opposite* was in fact taking place. From every imaginable source came reports that *all* Italian volunteers were being withdrawn from Spain.

This, of course, made it all a little confusing. And so people were surprised. Neither pleasantly nor unpleasantly. Just surprised. For obviously it doesn't matter to

us what Mussolini and the rest of these political cranks do in poor old Spain, which they seem to have selected as their *champ de manœuvres* at present, to try out their crazy doctrines, provided they leave *us* alone. And the Gentleman's Agreement of January 3rd was surely an undertaking on the part of Mussolini to this effect. He promised us that his little games in Spain were just a side-line and he would not stop in it once he'd driven Don Moses out.

We don't want Don Moses to be driven out. But on the other hand we're not going to risk our necks to keep Spain Red. It can be any colour it likes, provided it's not Black. We'd put our foot down if it wanted to be Fascist. That we won't stand for.

Christmas and New Year, it is no use disguising the fact, have been a little of a puzzle to all of us. Even I was puzzled. First, the Christmas holiday was a very long one. Three days. Just before it occurred Madame Tabouis threw a fit. She became unusually alarming. I must confess it was with some misgivings that I entered upon Christmas, and gave my last glance at the *Standard* on the Thursday night.

The news was very roughly this. As every sane man recognizes Hitler is not to be trusted an inch. Take your eyes off him for a minute, and he will be up to some mischief. But we, the British public, were about to take our eyes off him for *three days and nights*. At no other time are we allowed to take our eyes off him for *a second*. We get so into the habit of watching him, with a maniacal fixity, that it's a bit of a strain to drop that all of a sudden and not see him or hear him for three long days and nights.

I'm talking now for argument's sake as if I were *Hoi*

Poloi. You must forget what I said in my last Thought.

It may, of course, have been this reflection which generated in the minds of the journalists, who are as it were the sentinels of Democracy, this overwhelming anxiety, this diarrhoea of Dismay. However this may be, all sorts of rumours began flying about, each more alarmist than the last. It was reported, on the best authority, that the British and French Governments were turning to their Christmas dinners with a heavy heart, for information had reached them which suggested that the announcement that Hitler was going to his cottage in the Bavarian Mountains was a blind. In reality he was plotting a *coup*. An international *Putsch*. It may all have been deduction from what was only too probable, nothing more. But he was said to intend to seize either Danzig, or Spain, or Czechoslovakia; or perhaps all three.

Obviously he had no intention of going home for Christmas. Whatever else was true or not true, one could depend on that. People of that stamp are incapable of the normal and innocent relaxations in which other people indulge.

Some thought that disguised as a 'tourist' he had embarked upon a U-boat for Spain. He would land at Cadiz, creep into Madrid through the loyalist lines, disguised as a Spanish house painter, and set fire to the great Telephone Building where all the journalists are, while the Madrileños were sleeping the sleep of the just. The Reichstag fire was recalled. Is he not a born incendiary? Pritt, the Red King's Counsel, would have been briefed to try him in effigy afterwards in a new Guy Fawkes trial in Gray's Inn. Others said that Danzig was what he was after. Hence the yachting cap in which he

was last seen, suggestive of a Baltic cruise. And to yet other minds it appeared certain that he proposed to chop Czechoslovakia in half over the Christmas holiday: and we should all wake up and find, on Monday, 27th December, that Prague was under the heel of the most horrible tyranny since Genghis Khan, and that Madame Tabouis had succumbed in the arms of the Soviet Envoy.

These prognostications were backed up with solid economic facts. Was not Germany starving? Had not the refusal of the Democratic Powers—who between them in Paris, London and New York possess most of the gold reserves of the earth—to trade with Hitler or let him trade, or obtain any currency to buy rubber with, or cotton and oil, unless he agreed to remain without any army—had not this blunt refusal put Germany in the most terrible predicament? We were squeezing her till the pips squeaked. And by Jupiter weren't they just squeaking?

The only resource left to this dictator-rat we had bottled up in his hole, was to *break out*. Is it not the last resort of all unsound régimes, like that of the Nazis, to engage in a foreign adventure? Indeed there was no other course open to Hitler. And the Christmas holidays, as observed in other and Christian countries, including Russia (for there were newspaper articles assuring us that Stalin would have a Christmas tree, sent him by his dear old mother from Arshibashan), the festive season was a heaven-sent opportunity for such a piratic adventure as this, on the part of the 'mad dog of Europe'. That the French were taking no chances was pretty plain. French troops were massing on the Pyrenean Frontier, we were informed. This was in case it turned out to be Spain that was Hitler's sinister Christmas objective.

Country parsons and ladies and gentlemen conversant with the geography of these places had visions, very naturally, of the Prussian Guards goose-stepping up the streets of Bayonne or Perpignan: meanwhile, the French Army, unable without the help of their Russian and British Allies to withstand the onrush of the Hun, would be falling back in disorder, still bravely singing the Internationale and, with clenched fists aloft, swearing they would never *really* settle down under the malefic sign of the Swastika.

The more nervous were reassured, or rather it was sought to reassure them. It was said that the French Army were always apt to mass about this time of the year near the Pyrenees. Seasonal exercises in the sunny south. But we all saw through *that*. I was as nervous as anything for a short while. I do not at all seek to disguise the fact.

Things looked very black for Hitler all round, every newspaper was agreed. He had no butter, not enough flour to make enough bread, and most Germans were lucky if they ever got their teeth into a bit of meat. Now he was absolutely isolated in Europe. He had alienated Mussolini over Spain. He had sent a lot of rather rude storm troopers there who had not been polite to Italians helping Franco. Mussolini was very much incensed indeed. Mussolini had never been so angry since Mr. Eden treated him on the same footing as the Negus, as if he had been a nigger-kink. He had no further use for Hitler at all. *All Italian Volunteers had been recalled from Spain*. It was even declared that they had already left. Count Rossi had been recalled from the Balearic Islands. The Italians were definitely pulling out and leaving Hitler alone.

It was a case of the boy stood on the Burning Ship whence all but he had fled. Hitler was *alone*, standing

amid the ruins of his hopes, left in the lurch by the highly unreliable Mussolini, looked upon with that cold grim impartiality which foreigners find is so baffling and sometimes so galling (though always so impressive) by Mr. Ogilvie Forbes, our man in Madrid; and also *on the worst possible terms* with Franco.

Hitler's cup of bitterness was complete. His opinion of Franco was very low indeed. But low as it was, it was not so low as Franco's opinion of him.

All the Press at the time likewise began broadcasting a story that the German General Staff were in the most abject state of depression because it had been demonstrated in the course of the fighting in Spain that their aircraft were inferior in every respect to the Russian. Even such a funny but rather good little paper as *G. K.'s Weekly* swallowed the bait and repeated it. The German machines were slow and clumsy compared with the Russian, it affirmed, and, worse still, their pilots had been a great disappointment. The German airmen had been utterly outclassed by the Russian. For my part, I could readily believe all this. Indeed, I could not see how it could be otherwise. In spite of Mr. Churchill, whose estimate of German military might is so bloodcurdlingly high. Every day for months I had been reading in the reports of the Legitimate Government of the great numbers of rebel planes shot down. Sometimes as many as forty a day on all fronts. And I knew that the cold, objective, loyalist leaders were not given to exaggeration.

In view of this I was quite prepared to believe that it might be nearer *fifty* a day. Say three hundred a week. This actually would amount to an appreciable drain upon the German Air Force at home in Germany, would it not? Even computing its numbers at the

100,000 mark (is it?) favoured by Mr. Winston Churchill, nevertheless, in the end, enormously outclassed as they are in Spain, the home air-fleet of the Nazis will lose *some* of the staggering advantage it has obtained (by stealth and by fraud) over the combined air forces of France, Russia, Czechoslovakia and Great Britain. Well, in this posture, a starving and angry country behind him, disaster staring him in the face in Spain (which would have been made safe for Communism months ago, if *we* had had any say in the matter and Franco not interfered) Hitler had no alternative.

Indeed *The Times* told him as much. There were two paths open to him. Submission to the will of the Democratic Powers—Russia, the United States, France, and Great Britain, *or* starvation—that was one path: the other was a desperate throw of the dice, a warlike explosion. A break through 'the circle of death' as Mr. Lloyd George called it. Slow death by starvation, or violent death by the combined engines of destruction of the three greatest Empires in the world—Great Britain, France and Russia, and their economic satellites—was what in that case awaited him.

Meanwhile, France and Great Britain had addressed a note on Christmas Eve to those alleged to be interfering in Spain (no note sent to France naturally, since you cannot send a note to yourself). This Note asked them to stop immediately sending Volunteers to the Peninsula. And no doubt was left in any mind as to who was the arch-culprit. Adolf Hitler, of course. Who else could it be? Just for form's sake a Note had to be sent to Russia, since Russia of course had interfered more than anybody else, even France.

This was the really hair-raising prospect with which we all entered the Christmas holidays. *Hoi Poloi* as usual blissfully unconscious of everything except the sleepy round of his brutish, animal existence, which is so characteristic of him. But many a pukka diplomat must have fingered his Christmas cracker with a care-worn face, and with nerveless and preoccupied fingers.

I will confess that more than once I thought how disgraceful it was that Heppels, the Piccadilly chemist, had not laid in a stock of gas-masks. For a Christmas pudding is just the sort of thing that would have an almost irresistible attraction for a heathen like Hitler, or Goering, who I felt at any moment might terminate the eighteen-year-old Armistice by raining thermite bombs on our heads on Christmas day. Ned said I had grown into a perfect old woman when I said this, half jokingly, to him. But Ned will get a nasty jar one of these days.

However, Christmas came and went. Nothing happened. A complete calm had reigned everywhere, apparently. It was a bit uncanny. Perhaps Hitler had tricked Madame Tabouis after all? It would have been just like him.

Then began to occur a whole series of events, all of which contradicted the 'news' and the 'facts' of the Christmas Eve Press Offensive.

When the Christmas cloud lifted—in this case it was not a 'cloud' caused by a thick dust of word-particles, but an *absence* of words, or an absence of newspapers—Hitler was revealed sitting over his Christmas dessert in his mountain home. The German Press were (not unnaturally) enraged by all the tarrididdles that Madame Tabouis (prompted, no doubt, by her aforesaid politi-

cal inspiration) had been telling about him before the black-out. I was a little annoyed myself. Hitler was no longer *alone* either, in Spain or anywhere else. The picture had changed so utterly as to be unrecognizable. The pre-Christmas picture and the post-Christmas picture were as different as chalk from cheese. There was no more talk of the withdrawal of Italian Volunteers from Spain. Also (despite the fact that for several weeks the journalists had been officially tipped that Franco was finished) the beastly outcast forces of the Burgos Junta were showing signs of renewed life, of a most disquieting order.

The German Fleet (which had been reported on Christmas Eve to be mischievously massing in Spanish waters) were all home in German ports for Christmas. Only two ships had been left off the coast of Spain to watch German interests. And their countrymen were a little peeved (with certain reason) that all these fantastic reports had been spread abroad, so disturbing to the sense of peace and security which it is desirable to cultivate. Count Rossi, too, had merely gone back to Italy for Christmas: and Franco had been luxuriating in one of the few churches left in Spain, wrapped in his devotions.

It almost looked as if it were desired by *somebody* to prevent by fair means or foul (and for preference by foul ones) any of the Western peoples from ever feeling peaceful and secure again: as if, Christmas drawing near, that *morte saison*, and there being nothing in particular to fuss about at the moment, something had been especially invented for the occasion. For of course there *are* people who resent Yuletide in Western Europe as much as it is discouraged and disliked in Mother Russia. The spectacle of humanity at peace is by no means an attractive one to certain people.

But at this point an idealist like old Ned would up and ask why some action could not be taken by our Government to discourage such a storm of alarmist reports as that. For if it is possible for a kindly and democratic government like that of Russia to put a spoke in the wheel of those too much addicted to religion, especially at Christmastime, well, would it not be equally possible for our rather more hard-boiled Executive to put a stop to this plague of lies, this terroristic alarmism, which one fine day might have a rather unpleasant result? That is the sort of silly question Ned is fond of asking.

The answer, of course, is this. Our Government could stop all this organized panic in a moment, *if it wanted to*. If it can dismiss a King, when he comes too much of it, they could, if they wanted to, prevent the Press from creating incessantly this atmosphere of terror. They could ban Madame Tabouis as a dangerous agitator from the pages of our papers, just as certainly as they could stop her from landing on our shores, should she propose to do that.

But they do not want to. That is the answer. If they discouraged this Press terrorism, which keeps the public in a perpetual state of alert and alarm, however would they be able to bring home to it the terrible danger of Herr Hitler? And if there is one thing more than another they have at all costs to remember, it is this. *All the time* a wholesome dread of Herr Hitler has got to be cultivated in the English people. For one day soon they will be asked to *fight* Herr Hitler. And it is very necessary that they should understand the sort of incredibly dangerous and unscrupulous reptile they have to deal with. And deal with him we *shall*.

POSTSCRIPT

I am getting rather alarmed about the Coronation. For that's another of those times when God-fearing and freedom-loving folks are off their guard. And sure enough, Hitler is once more plotting to stab us in the back, the blackguard, while we are busy junketing.

But Mr. Isidore Ostrer is alive to the danger, and so, too, he tells us, is Mr. Eden. All over the front page of the *Sunday Referee* (on *February 21st, 1937*) the Alarm is sounded:

'NEW HITLER SENSATION

'NEXT COUP WILL BE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

'Invasion Planned for Coronation Month.'

I'm jolly glad that we have got good warning of this. I should have hated to have had this sprung on me twenty-four hours before the start of the Coronation celebration.

Mr. Isidore Ostrer, if that is possible, is *too* grimly zealous where Hitler is concerned—even Hitler cannot be so black as Mr. Ostrer paints him; but this time it's *Thank you Mr. Ostrer* for the tip.

Mr. Eden (who apparently can never get any news in London) has been for a fortnight on the continent and is hurrying back full of alarm. 'Mr. Anthony Eden, as a result (of the information *re* Hitler) is to-day, racing back from the South of France, where he has been on holiday.' Thank God our Foreign Secretary is wide awake, if no one else is. But as the Coronation day approaches, I for one will be full of misgivings. It is an *ideal* time for that frogmarching, jew-baiting criminal, Hitler, to bring off one of his dirty coups. The skunk! (On the same page of

the *Sunday Referee* that carries the Hitler headlines I noticed the heading: 'Mrs. Simpson has coronets on her pyjamas.' I do think that Mr. Ostrer ought to stop his staff from mixing up such serious, not to say appalling, news as this about Hitler and our Coronation, with Mrs. Simpson's pyjamas. Cannot he see that it detracts from the solemnity of the news about Czechoslovakia? Could it not have been put in the Ladies' Page?)

THOUGHT EIGHT

A PERMANENT STATE OF
ALARM

(Unquestionably the Spanish sun enervates the British character. In this land of *mañana* the Briton just goes all un-British and Bolshie, under the influence of Franco. Launcelot becomes aware of this on reading *Spanish Journey*, by an English lady, who recounts her terrible experiences among the British residents of Seville and other Franco cities. How the B.B.C. bravely sets its face against this degraded defeatism of the British *déclassé* and strikes many a shrewd blow for Freedom and Don Moses.)

THOUGHT EIGHT

A PERMANENT STATE OF
ALARM

THE tail-end of my last Thought put it pretty straight I flatter myself. The weapon of Press Terrorism is too damned useful for us to abandon it. That's what it boils down to. If it did not exist—if it were not guaranteed to us by Madame Tabouis and 'Pertinax'—we should have to *invent* a permanent state of alarm.

If the public were left alone for a single minute (especially at such a peaceable season of the year as Christmas) they would forget all about Hitler. This would be fatal. Their memories, alas, are short. They would quickly forget the Rhineland *coup*. Even that! Even the Saar might fade into oblivion, in spite of the hideous rumpus that accompanied it. For my own part, I don't believe *Hoi Poloi* would turn a hair if Hitler occupied Danzig! It's an alarming thought, that!

Ned has given me a book to read called *Spanish Journey* by Eleonora Tennant. It seems to me a rather Bolshie sort of book. The sort Ned is always picking up and praising to the skies. But one reason that he likes it is obviously because it's rather critical of the B.B.C., which is Ned's *bête noire*.

The chapter in which the B.B.C. comes in is headed 'The Opinion of British Residents in Spain'. And a more

unpatriotic lot I have seldom encountered, in the flesh or between the pages of a book, than these 'British Residents in Spain'. They're very little short of Bolshies. They have become degraded and de-Britonized by the enervating Spanish sun.

How an English lady like Mrs. Tennant could listen to their disgusting diatribes, much less retail them, defeats me. She must have a streak of this misplaced idealism which makes Ned so difficult sometimes. This is what Mrs. Tennant says anyway—you'd better see the sort of thing that is going on, though I am glad to say the principal offender among these Bolshie Britons appears to be a Scotchman. 'Scot', begging his pardon.

'British interests in Spain are wide and deep rooted, and large sums of British capital are at stake in iron mines, copper mines, railways, and various industries. There are hundreds of Britishers resident in Spain looking after these interests, and almost without exception they are astounded and indignant at the opposition they feel is coming from Britain to the Nationalists, and at the moral support that seems to be given to the Madrid Government.'

'Just because I was known to have recently come from London, I was bitterly attacked by British residents, who stopped me in the street or in my hotel. To give one typical conversation.

'A Scotsman, long resident in Spain, called at my hotel in Seville and addressed me as follows: "I hear you are out here looking for information—well, I have come round to tell you what I feel about our people. I want to know why *The Times* and the B.B.C. are supporting the Reds. What is making the people in England so Madrid-minded when there is so much British capital

in Spain? Don't they realize that if the Reds won this, capital would be confiscated?"¹ He then went on heatedly to refer to the B.B.C. and the damage they were doing by their inaccurate broadcasts, based on news received from Madrid. He pointed out that the false reports broadcast from London of towns being bombed has been causing unnecessary distress and alarm to relatives in England and elsewhere. He said that inaccurate reports about coastal bombing and movements of troops had caused loss of money to our shipping and had interfered with trade, because on several occasions captains of ships had avoided putting into ports which the B.B.C. had falsely described as being bombed.

"Another Britisher who had lived in Huelva for some eighteen years was vociferous about the B.B.C. He told me that on about August 15th the B.B.C. announced that Huelva had been retaken by the Madrid Government."

'This news, in an area where so many people speak English, spread like wildfire. Besides causing astonishment to the people of Huelva, who were living peacefully under the Nationalists, it caused 600 Rio Tinto miners to march on Huelva in the hope of taking part in the sacking of the town.

'Near Huelva they met the Nationalist outposts, who opened fire, and about eighty of the miners were killed. The rest fled into the hills. My informant considers that this innaccurate broadcast was responsible for the death of these eighty men, as false information is as cruel as poison gas.

'I can testify from personal observation to one B.B.C. inaccuracy. On Wednesday, October 28th, they broad-

¹ You will note how for this Scot nothing more inspiring than money enters into the question.

cast that on October 27th Talavera had been bombed, great havoc caused, and nineteen insurgent planes shot down.

'I was in Talavera during this attack. About three Red planes came over and dropped a few bombs, which all fell outside the town. No damage was done, and no planes on either side were shot down.

'The inaccurate broadcasts from England were a source of general comment among the British residents in Seville, and I quote extracts from a letter I was handed from a prominent Scotsman which deals with the subject:

' "Regarding our telephone conversation of to-day, the following is what actually happened.

' "August 1st, midday, I heard the B.B.C. broadcast that Seville had been bombed ('heavily bombed', I think) the previous night. As my wife was then in England, and families of other British and foreign residents were also in England, I sent off the following cable—say about 3 p.m.:

' "*British Broadcasting Corporation, London.*

' "Midday Broadcasting Stating Aerial Bombardment Last Night Completely False Please Give Publicity Behalf Family in England. William Mundy British Resident Seville."

' "At 8 p.m. that evening the B.B.C. referred to the matter and said that since their midday broadcast they had received a cable from a British resident in Seville saying that Seville had not been bombed the previous night. . . .

' "A few days later I followed up with a letter and drew their attention to the inaccuracy of their news of Seville and district, which to my personal knowledge was in-

accurate, and I suggested that they did not lean too much on Madrid news.

' "Britons in Southern Spain feel that there is no excuse for this continual dissemination of false information, because the Nationalist General, Queipo de Llano, broadcasts nearly every night from Seville, giving accurate information as to the daily events. It is felt that, even if the B.B.C. prefers to rely on news from Madrid, the Nationalist version should also be given."

' "Do not the British public realize", I was often asked, "that if the Reds had won there would have been no security of life or property for anyone, foreigners as well as Spaniards? We have to thank God that Franco has managed to protect so many British lives and so much British property."

'This pro-Madrid attitude not only filled the Britons in Spain with rage, shame and amazement, but it bitterly disappointed the Spanish Nationalists. For centuries the Spaniards have learnt to admire everything British, the love of freedom and fair play, the traditional kindness and hatred of cruelty. Consequently when the civil war broke out the Nationalists had never doubted that they would have the sympathy of Britain, even though at first open support might be withheld.'

Here, in Mrs. Tennant's account of things, we see Britons in Spain openly associating with outlaws—espousing the cause of the brigand Franco and his outcast Junta, and actually following an English lady about in the street to importune her with their visibly partisan views: taking advantage of her British feeling for fair play (which, being British themselves, they knew only too well she must possess, the shameless renegades) to

impose upon her what must be the exceedingly distasteful duty of 'enlightening' the British public.

It may be objected that if the B.B.C. *had* enlightened the British public, had given both sides of the question, had been even relatively fair and *occasionally* impartial, that then it would not have been necessary for Mrs. Tennant to voice these indignant protests of the British in Spain. They would have fallen to the ground, if ever advanced.

But you do see what you would be asking the B.B.C. to do? You would be asking them to 'be fair' where fairness is wholly out of place. You cannot be 'fair' to a vermin, a fox or a rat. You undermine the whole principle of Law if you do. And Mrs. Tennant has put her finger on the spot when she says: '*The main reason for the British bias against General Franco seems to be the fear that he is a Fascist.*'

That is it. *He is a Fascist.* We might have tolerated him as a 'rebel'. We might have taken a broad-minded view of his enormities. It would not be the first time, after all, that Great Britain had been tolerant of a 'rebel'—even of a revolutionary. Lord Palmerston never once failed to support a revolutionary rising anywhere in Europe. Englishmen then were accused of placing too little store, not *too much*, by the Legitimate Government of a country. The fact of its legitimacy was said to weigh too lightly with them rather than the reverse.

Does not this distinguished authoress understand that even to *look like* a Fascist is quite enough for Mr. Baldwin or for any other true Englishman? And what is enough or more than enough for Mr. Baldwin, is certainly enough for the B.B.C. For the B.B.C. are a notoriously broad-minded and patriotic lot. (That comes, of course,

of being brainy. And that Mongoose case showed they were a pretty intellectual lot).

Mrs. Tennant has something to say about *The Times* too. Disobliging I am sorely afraid. But does she not know that *The Times* is the official paper, more or less, of the Baldwin administration? Just as the B.B.C. is to all intents and purposes a department of state—of the State conceived as a department of The International. The fine flower of the Left Wing gravitates to it inexorably. The *Manchester Guardian* and the London School of Economics are its recognized recruiting grounds.

As far as Franco is concerned, or anyone who has even a Fascist look, is not that enough? These institutions selected for criticism by Mrs. Tennant are closely in touch with our Government and so it is more than enough. It is no use saying that Franco is *not* a Fascist. Of course he isn't. But even to oppose (and with arms in his hand!) in the way that he has done, the programme of Communism, is quite enough for us.

For no one opposes Communism who is not in some way fascistically inclined. To criticize Communism in any way, or to have any feelings at all about it (except a sort of warm cosy feeling whenever it floats into your ken, as, say, when you hear that Red armies in China have made an example of three or four thousand Chinamen in some city they were occupying) is to be suspect.

This is as a matter of fact a very interesting point. If you are to be irreproachable, you have definitely to *support*—if it is only a little—Communism. There is no absolute 'neutrality' to-day. That is impossible. To be neutral, to be quite frank, is to be Fascist. You must be *a bit* of a Bolshie. A wee bit. It is not required of you to be the whole hog.

To give you an example of what I mean. I have just joined 'The Friends of Russia'. To be on the safe side, don't you know. Belonging to a rather posh club and all that, if I hadn't done something of this sort, sooner or later I should have been suspected of Fascist sympathies.

No. Franco is in an impossible position. It's just a waste of time to try and defend him. He should have put his services at the disposal of Don Moses. That was the correct thing to do. Then he would have been a caballero—if you will overlook the pun! (Largo Caballero is the Spanish end of the Red dictatorship in Spain.)

If you wish to prove that you are *not* a Fascist to the Baldwinian, you must by some gesture have proved your sympathy with Soviet Russia. But if you are discovered by him in arms *against* Soviet Communism, that is decisive. It puts you out of Court just as surely as if you had knocked down a police constable. No one but a Fascist by nature, and a man liable, oh, to be 'fair' to Hitler, or Heaven knows what, could be really hostile to Russian Communism. Seeing all the magnificent work Russia is doing in the way of combating and check-mating Hitler (real pukka police work) it is only a mad-man at present who would be so inhospitable to it when it comes to his shores as Franco has been. So much for 'fairness' where the Spanish outlaw, Franco, is concerned.

Mr. Baldwin is really like a character in Bunyan. Mr. Trueblue Red-Friend Trust-me Bank-man Bold Bad Bald. He shows his unerring sense of Unreality (no *Realpolitik* for him) in his almost murderous antipathy for the fantastic Führer. Over and over again he asserts that *another* general war would mean the end of civilization. But he will, I believe, pull down the world rather

than let Hitler live—and gaze at him above those little moustaches of his over the North Sea. Of course Mr. Baldwin is an old man, so pulling the world down doesn't matter to him so much as it does to some of us. But that Hitler of all people should have aroused this '*après moi le déluge*' sort of a sensation in Mr. Baldwin is wonderful. It's one up to old Adolf. And it *does* seem a little *disproportionate* somehow. In other times, Mr. Baldwin might even have been suspected of being a little mad.

I believe that some people think that when Mr. Baldwin makes one of his frequent speeches about 'Dictatorship' (this means Hitler—since of course Stalin is a dictator, and Mr. Baldwin is a sort of dictator himself) that he doesn't mean it. My word doesn't he! You see if he doesn't. He'll taste Hitler's blood yet, with his dying breath, you see if he doesn't. I shouldn't like to be in Hitler's shoes, with Baldwin after him to get him!

THOUGHT NINE

SPAIN WITHOUT KARL MARX

(Launcelot, speaking as one *pukka sahib* to another, tells us what Spain would have been like in 1937 if Karl Marx had never lived. But he wishes you to keep it under your hat.)

THOUGHT NINE

SPAIN WITHOUT KARL MARX

Now for my Ninth Thought. 'Spain without Karl Marx,' I should call it, if I were calling this Thinking Aloud anything.

Supposing there had been no such thing as Russian Communism: supposing Karl Marx had never lived. What would Spain then be like to-day? Obviously much the same as yesterday. It would be its same old liberalist, siesta-ridden self.

It would have kicked out its king. For thirty years ago the Spanish Intelligentsia heard of the French Revolution! They realized they were rather backward in having a king. But otherwise, just sleepy decay. Just bull-fights and *palomas*: a peseta favourable to tourists: the Lottery dominating every other interest: a sort of Edwardian calm, of Jersey lilies and hansom cabs. Almost like China.

But Marx lived, and lived to some purpose. And his birth and death, and all that went on in between, is going to change the history of Spain. For most fortunately as some think, and not others, Marx, like Mahomet, directed his disciples to cut the throat of any dog of a disbeliever who fought shy of his Holy Writ. And they'd all go to a beautiful Red Hell (a far more amusing place of permanent residence than a silly old Heaven full of harps) as a reward for this bit of doctrinal homicide.

Speaking *inter pares* and as one *pukka sahib* to another, if it hadn't have been for Marx or his disciple Cohen (spelt in the Magyar way usually) there'd have been no Franco. Franco is the child of Marx it might almost be said. He'd never have been heard of if it hadn't have been for Marx.

General Franco is an ordinary old-fashioned anti-monarchical Spanish *liberal*, like his airman brother. And if the Spanish Marxists hadn't been so clumsy he wouldn't be in the field against them at all. He'd be at their side. Franco is part of sleepy old bull-fighting Spain,—no more a Fascist than you are, but a Catholic soldier who didn't like seeing priests and nuns killed. He just didn't want to see all his friends murdered for no better reason than that they all went to mass and to the more expensive cafés and usually were able to scrape enough money together to have a haircut and a shave.

No. In the strictest confidence, if no 'communist agitators' (that is salaried officials of the Imperial Red Government of our friend and ally, Russia) had entered Spain, sojourned there, stirred up a Soviet revolution there, then there would have been no Franco, no Alcázar, no bombing of Madrid, no nothing. Just backward old Spanish liberalist democracy, jogging along, on its sleepy, penurious, dignified way. Ever so picturesque, and probably happier than it will ever be again—in spite of the lazy squalor and corruption.

But God willed it otherwise. It was marked down for the Marxist scourge, as we shall be marked down for it one of these fine afternoons. *Ordeal by Marx* was its lot. And it's faced up to Marx like a man (which is maybe more than we shall). Spain has saved Europe once or twice. It is probably saving it again at this moment, as

I write. Though old G. B. (this is short for Great Britain—it's what the British cars have on their backs on the continent) doesn't want to be saved, and feels rather snooty about Spain. G. B. doesn't like Marx particularly. But she dislikes Hitler so much that she would rather Spain and France and Belgium and Czechoslovakia and Poland and Greece all became Soviet lands rather than that Hitler should win—or even continue to exist. Indeed, G. B. would rather go Communist herself than that—if it meant that otherwise Hitler would survive. (And when I say 'G. B.' I don't mean *us*. I mean the marionette upon the little stage floor I was talking about just now, in one of my Thoughts, you remember?)

This is all a secret though. A conservative secret. A clubman's secret.

But this is such a whale of a thought that I will stop here. It must be a short Thought, since it's so big. Then I'll think again.

THOUGHT TEN

SPAIN—SECRET HISTORY

(Launcelot throws discretion to the winds. He asks what would happen here if Cripps, Pollitt, and Pritt were the 'Legitimate Government', if then another Don Moses arrived and a pogrom of all who were neither manual nor intellectual workers began? The officer riff-raff of Spain resisted Don Moses. Would the officer riff-raff of Great Britain go 'rebel' and do the same?—Launcelot gives you the lowdown on the situation in Spain: how it started and how it has gone on. And he shows how all you have to say to Britannia is 'Hitler', and she sees Red! She clenches her fist, links arms with Blum and Litvinov, and is ready for anything.)

SPAIN—SECRET HISTORY

THE history of Spain is in a sense *a history of invasion*. As much to-day as yesterday. And if you were going to be perfectly frank about the Spanish Civil War we should have to admit that the Marxists invaded it *first*.

First swarmed in the Marxist. Then came the insufferable Hitlerites, shouting their absurd anti-Marxist slogans, to drive them out. The Italian Fascist came too, for the same purpose. And I shouldn't be surprised if on the heels of the Hitlerites would come the Frogs with some British battalions.

But the first on the ground (and I very much hope that *Hoi Poloi* has not got his ear to the keyhole) were our distinguished allies from the Soviet. Quite for our *private* information it is perhaps better to admit that it is the Comintern, it is our ally Russia, who is the cause in the first place of this disturbance: and will be the prime mover in other trouble elsewhere. That is the price we pay for having Russia as an ally against Hitler so it can't be helped. It is unpleasant but there you are.

Well that's how it *started*. Marx's disciples got busy in Spain. Everything began to get a bit hectic. This was after the king was hoofed out. The Spaniards had always been such fearful individualists that the bourgeois parties could always rely upon the revolutionary sects, if left to

their own devices, to exterminate each other. This until the Marxists took a hand.

This still obtains to some extent. The F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M. scrap like cats. The one is as much against being bossed as the other is all for bossing. The other night in Barcelona they turned all the electric lights off for an hour or two to enable the Stalinists to wipe out the Trotskyists. Even Marxism—in Spain—loses some of its iron discipline. Though Marxism always ends in boss-rule. So half the Spanish proletariat will have to be wiped out by the Marxists, since, if you are bent on bossing, you have to stamp out Spanish Anarchism.

But on the whole Marxism is making a new man of the Spaniard. His 'rugged individualism' will be a thing of the past in twelve months' time. All the 'individualists' will be killed off, as I have just said, and the rest, under a good stiff Red Terror, will toe the line. Probably Don Moses, or whatever Red Boss is there to do it, will have to pick off upwards of ten thousand pure Anarchists, perhaps more. Anarchists have to be killed just like vermin. If you want law and order, there's nothing else to be done with them, our Communist friends say. Then things will be nice and quiet.

Of course I should just hate to see Marx come to England. But I think he's damn good for Spain. I think he'll be the making of Spain. We don't want any law and order here. We've got enough of it. Besides we want all to get better off, not the other way round. But it's jolly good for Spain. Or any other dago country, even France, since the Frogs are such an unruly lot.

Let's get back to the beginning. This messy little show started in Spain after the Legitimate Government had murdered Sotelo. He was a horrible Fascist, one of the

worst. Twenty Civil Guards dragged him out of his house at night and shot him in a cemetery. This was the last straw and all the Fascists just saw red. Also all the officers in the army were being dismissed and Franco and those that remained realized they would soon be without a job.

It was as if Cripps and Pollitt and Pritt had become 'Legitimate' here and began dismissing all our army officers and civil servants. There'd be a bit of a stink. Though you would not find that Englishmen would resist the Legitimate Government in the way this officer riff-raff in Spain has. Not the *Government of the Day*.

But before this happened the Legitimate Government of Spain had put in a lot of useful work. Two or three hundred churches had been burnt. Scores of Fascists had been 'liquidated', as our Russian allies put it. They'd done more 'purging' in a few months than old Hitler with all his power has done in as many years.

In one place in their grim enthusiasm the local representatives of the Legitimate Government cut off a young Fascist's head and stuck it on a pike. They paraded it round the town with clenched fists aloft. The other Fascists were very indignant, and in the most cowardly way shot one of the ringleaders. Then, of course, there was a bit of a blood-bath. A sort of Saint Bartholomew's Eve on a small scale. After that anyone even suspected of Fascism had his throat cut.

All this occurred *before* the Civil War started. For wipe them out as they would, wherever they could lay their hands on them, there were still plenty of them left. Far too many.

Of course Fascists over here, and I am sorry to say there are such people even among us, argue that the

Legitimate Government had no right to shoot up all their political opponents. They say that if Mr. Attlee became Prime Minister and immediately threw into prison all the members of the Carlton Club, cut a few of their tongues out, and nailed a few of them up by their ears; dismissed all the Aldershot Command and the personnel of the War Office, killed Mr. Hilaire Belloc, exhumed Mr. Chesterton and defiled his corpse, and quietly began wiping out the officials of the Conservative Office, and if Mr. Neville Chamberlain had to fly for his life to Germany in the dead of night, with a postiche beard, that that would not be *constitutional*.

Such behaviour on the part of the Left Wing would not be *democratic* they assert. But what, I should like to know, do these Fascists understand about democracy? Since when have they been commissioned to teach us what democracy means?

Anyhow, in a quiet way the Legitimate Government of Spain had been making ready for Civil War. (Just as we, in our quiet way, are getting ready for the next European War.) *Not* provoking it, as the Fascists contend. Just taking no chances and exterminating in advance the sort of people who wouldn't exactly welcome Moses Rosenberg. Forewarned is forearmed. Also a stitch in time saves nine!

But Franco, the obnoxious intriguer, willed it otherwise. He determined to meet force with force. *Legal* force with *illegal* force. The way of the bandit! And then of course began the disgraceful Civil War at which we have all been assisting for the last six months, with growing horror and disgust; although we have been shielded from the worst of it by our magnificent Press, which has informed us only of the mildest horrors, and has bravely

kept smiling and talked about other things, such as cricket and the quintuplets.

Meanwhile before Franco came on the scene and the Civil War began, the Legitimate Government had had to be modified a little. Not toned down but toned up. The members of it with Fascist leanings hesitated to take the necessary steps, such as the suppression of Sotelo. To clean the Augean Stables, they shrank from the salutary police-work that was indicated.

Once the Civil War began, of course, all these Fascist elements in the Government just had to be locked up, and Caballero who is a straight Communist and no nonsense took the helm. He dressed up in overalls to emphasize his humble origin; and shouldered a musket to show he was ready for anything.

They call Caballero 'The Lenin of Spain'. He doesn't look to me like a Lenin. He looks more like a Marxist Primo de Rivera. But of course, once things properly started up, Moscow sent out Moses Rosenberg, who soon put a bit of much needed stiffening into old Caballero.

What a name for a Red Leader to have. Caballero! In Spanish 'Caballero' means Gentleman. That is symbolic of the Spanish scene is it not? They have to choose a man called 'Gentleman' to lead a Marxist racket. Like us, they are aristocratic to the finger-tips, the jolly old Dons.

Things began to hum once Don Moses got firmly in the saddle—the saddle vacated by this same Caballero. (Caballero also means *horseman*.) Even *The Times* (who was all for what was Legitimate from the outset) was a bit startled at the daily toll of executions. Don Moses's first fine careless rapture was more even than *The Times* could stomach!

When the troops of the Legitimate Government vacated the town of Ronda, the Rebels who had had the impudence to drive them out found five hundred corpses, most of them with toothpicks stuck in their eyeballs and their tongues sawn out (and most of these were not Fascists, only not manual workers). One or two English newspapers had a spasm of reactionary indignation. It was rather funny to watch.

But luckily before that wave of namby-pamby sentimentalism could go very far, it was reported that Franco had started a few reprisals. In a mild way, it is true. He hadn't the guts to do it properly, and use toothpicks. And he respected his enemies' testicles.

Violence breeds violence in the long run—as a tactless policeman who kicks his captive in the stomach usually finds. In Badajos a lot of men who had been picking off Moors from roof-tops got the goat of these bloodthirsty Blackamoors, who, when they surrendered, put a bullet in them, to teach them not to snipe once the battle is over.

But for a Marxist the battle is *never* over. That is what I like about him. He thoroughly despises our old European chivalries and the silly rules of the Sport of Kings.

Also people convicted of having burnt alive over five women, say (I don't know if I've got the figures right), were handed over to a firing squad.

This made a very bad impression in England; though for my part it was only what I had expected of Franco all along. I knew that *in the end* he would lose his patience and behave in an unsuitable way. Give him a rope, thought I, and Franco will hang himself. And he did. We were then able to refer to 'the Spanish Horror' and drop

all that nonsense about 'the Red Horror'. All Spaniards without distinction became horrible, and we lost interest.

Anyhow this put a stop to any misplaced qualms regarding the good clean revolutionary work old Moses Rosenberg had been putting in before Franco got busy. And of course to-day (that is in the first months of 1937) nearly all the well-to-do people who were in the hands or within the jurisdiction of the Legitimate Government have been disposed of. A batch of 200 were bombed to pieces just before Christmas in Bilbao. A British ship was standing by at the time to take them away to Bayonne. It had to go back to Bayonne empty. All its passengers had gone to a better world instead.

So of course the executions became fewer and fewer. Our sentimentalists haven't any longer anything to complain about thank goodness. That closes *that* chapter.

By November Great Britain was freely criticized in the Fascist Press of Spain. This put every Englishman's back up. For we do not brook criticism from outlaws. And the insolent tone adopted by these penniless rebels (I have explained that Don Moses has got all the boodle) was sufficient to show that we had not erred on the *severe* side in our attitude to their cause. We had been too lenient.

'It is lamentable that nations like Great Britain and the United States and other highly civilized peoples who possess societies for the protection of animals should pay no attention to the veritable man-hunt organized by the Marxists since August 18th.'

These are observations made by one of the vilest of the Rebel Generals, on November 13th. When I saw it, it made my blood boil. The sneer about our Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals particularly got my

goat. (It was as if someone had been *cruel* to my goat. He he!)

On the whole the British Press has behaved magnificently. It has upheld its highest tradition. It has refused to pay any attention to the Rebel side, as an insurrectionary party with no standing. For a moment, just at first, *The Times* rather lost its poise. Then it recovered itself, and I am glad to say since then has never looked back.

As a matter of fact *The Times*, when it did lose its poise for a day or two, had the sense to protect itself. It headed *Uncensored* what it said about the 'atrocities' perpetrated by the Communists. So that after this regrettable lapse, it could go on with its usual reports from Madrid, as if nothing had happened—reports in which, needless to say, no undue attention was paid to these little bumpings off, inseparable from any outbreak of *Legitimacy* (if that is the way to refer to the actions of a Legitimate Government driven in a corner by military banditti).

Things had been pretty hot for some time. All the continental Press had of course been full of accounts of the very thorough nature of the Communist regime now obtaining in Madrid and elsewhere. But we had not considered it necessary over here to inform the British public of these events. What the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve. And it was a pretty absorbing Football Season that had just started and the *Talking Mongoose* came to our rescue. There was 'no call' whatever to obtrude upon the notice of poor old *Hoi Poloi* this savage behaviour which is such a feature of any dago dust-up.

It was generally known that the Spanish Revolution had already taken a greater toll of life than the French Revolutionary 'Terror'. Robespierre, the *sea-green incorruptible*, had been put in the shade. But after all the

Communists had time and again prophesied that the Spanish Revolution, when it came, would be a pretty brutal affair. When they really got Spain into their hands, they had warned us that they meant to make things hum. And they had made things hum.

Dean Inge says it is bull-fighting that makes the Spaniards so brutal. I'm inclined to think that Marxist methods must be taken into account. But that is a moot point.

It is, all said and done, not fair to compare the French Revolution with these latter-day ones. It stands to reason that modern improvements, in lethal equipment, the immensely improved technique of the *coup d'état*, the hand-books assembling all the relevant data as to efficient mass murder and street fighting, tend to make these little shows more, and not less, sanguinary. And then Marxism has undoubtedly imparted a sort of asiatic fury of fanatical destructiveness into the character of domestic strife, or 'class-war', that must make the French Revolution look rather a milk and water affair. Robespierre would turn green not with incorruptibility but envy, I'm thinking, if he could come back and watch Moses Rosenberg at work for half an hour.

After all, these things are no longer European. They are International—and so of course asiatic. And the old relative moderation, or 'measure', that was at least the ideal of the nations that came out of the Roman Empire, is no longer there. We have changed, or are changing, from Romans into Carthaginians. We have gone asiatic.

When our blood is up, we do the thing properly. There is none of that '*Si Messieurs les Ennemis veulent bien commencer!*' about wars. And anyway all our wars now are going to be Civil Wars.

Notoriously a Civil War is less civilized and circumspect than mere war. Naturally when it is members of the same nation that are scrapping it's a bit fiercer. For they all know, seeing that they are their compatriots, what dirty dogs the other side are.

There's none of that sentimental nonsense productive of the sort of situation, after a war, in which 'ex-enemies' are fêted. The sort of thing we see happening to-day in England, when German ex-service men come over here. It makes a great difference if you can't speak another man's language! You never get to know him well enough to appreciate what a dull, cowardly, closefisted, treacherous skunk he is.

It's just the same as animals. Look what a fuss people make over horses or dogs. They like them much better than they like their fellow-men. But they wouldn't be taken in by a dog if they were *another* dog. They'd loathe horses if they were themselves horses.

I sometimes think that the only reason dogs don't bite us is because they can't speak. They respect us. They wouldn't if they could understand us. Whereas no self-respecting horse would allow a man to ride about on it, if it understood the sort of dressed-up rabbit it had on its back; or could swap thoughts with him by means of conversation, and was able to appraise his intellectual attainments as we are. He'd fling him off at once and land him one in the belly.

Oh, while I am writing all this down for you a new batch of newspapers has turned up. It's an old batch really—I mislaid them. I get five a day now. I find I must do that to get a consistent picture of events and check up the tarradiddles and eliminate the fairy-tales that naturally have to be invented to coax forward, or

to frighten backwards, *Hoi Poloi*. Among this batch—they are of January 9th—*The Times*, I am sorry to say, had another lapse.

It is headed:

Uncensored.

From our Special Correspondent.

Valencia, January 1st, 1937.

What evidently had happened is this—to cause *The Times* to hedge again. First of all the Russians and French poured in masses of men and Franco was definitely brought to a standstill before Madrid by sheer weight of numbers. Then at last Germany began sending 'volunteers' too, also Italy, until there are now nearly as many Germans and Italians as there are 'international' troops. This naturally alters the situation. Franco is again on the offensive. It is at present believed in London that Madrid will fall by the end of the month. So Great Britain is preparing for the moment when Franco will have to be acknowledged and to make the best terms she can with this upstart Fascist ruffian, and pretend that all along she has secretly longed for his triumph. That is the idea. Of course this won't take in old Franco. But it's only policy. I rather applaud it.

As Mussolini categorically refused to allow Russia and France to occupy Spain and make it a Communist colony, Great Britain had either to go to war with 'the Fascist Powers' at once, on behalf of Russia and France, or not. She thought it better not. She won't be ready for another eighteen months. (This is of course in confidence.) Under these circumstances she had to let Franco drive the Reds from Madrid if he can: counting of course on his being held up by the Soviet Republic of Catalonia, in process of formation, when he reached the Catalan

marches. Surely they'll be able to keep him out of that! Meanwhile undoubtedly the 'Gentleman's Agreement' with Italy is a *carte blanche*, as the *Journal de Genève* calls it, for Italy to help Franco and shorten this *silly* part of the struggle. It's getting on everybody's nerves. I know it's getting on mine.

But of course this is the Hoare-Laval pact over again, this 'Gentleman's Agreement'. All these shows (this is only the second) will have its Hoare-Laval pact, as soon as it is obvious that our side isn't going to win.

The British public cannot be mobilized against this one quite so easily as they were against the Hoare-Laval pact. Once bit twice shy! The League of Nations Union isn't functioning properly for some reason. And the bishops seem to have exhausted themselves over ex-King Edward.

On the other hand there is a snag. The public have heard very little but good of the 'Madrid Government' in the Press, over the ether, or in the cinema. And so in order to remind them that there *is* another side to this Spanish question, a few articles must be got out calling the Moses Rosenberg-Caballero racket 'Red'. The British public must be reminded that this is after all a *revolution*.

Hence *The Times* headlines:

THE VALENCIA JUNTA.

RED RIVALRIES.

REVOLUTION AND WAR.

I'll quote a lot of this article, as it shows the way the winds are blowing in the Sierras.

'As Prime Minister, Señor Largo Caballero assumed the direction of a double task, that of carrying out a revolution as well as carrying on a war.' (Pretty straight

from the shoulder that, eh! A *revolution*.) 'In the requirement of this double purpose is to be found an explanation of the difficulties with which the "Spanish Lenin" and his colleagues are now struggling.

'The war calls for unity of command, administration, and supply—in a word—centralization. The Revolution, on the other hand, is a disintegrating force. . . .

'When obliged to abandon the capital, the Cabinet removed, with the gold of the Bank of Spain, as much machinery of State as possible. . . . Three men in particular, Señor Martínez Barrios, Speaker of the Cortes, Don Indalecio Prieto, the Socialist, and M. Marcel Rosenberg, the Russian ambassador', ('Marcel' is good!) 'form a hidden triumvirate. . . . From Generals to militiamen the new Spanish Army wear the Red Star on their caps.' (That's pretty plain speaking what!) 'Spontaneously adopted by the people in arms and worn by the foreign brigades, it has finally become by Ministerial decision the official emblem of the Republican forces. The Tricolor has all but disappeared in favour of the Red Flag. The Internationale, not the Himno de Riego, is heard on all sides. . . . The Militia still predominate, and prefer to figure under some picturesque Marxist patronymic rather than take a number and submit to the military code of justice. Some time must pass before they will be licked into shape; the key men supplied by Rosenberg are working hard. . . . The Liberal Constitution framed in 1931 but never enforced has been thrown overboard by the unions. What meaning otherwise have the incantaciones, the seizures of property ranging from Government Departments and private buildings down to the very crops on the trees and in the fields, the countless invasions of domiciles, the wholesale

looting of shops and even banks, under the thin veil of *bonos* (requisition orders) or merely on verbal mandates of self-elected authorities? Justice has all but disappeared. The "People's" prisoners, acquitted by the people's representatives on the *Tribunal Popular* one day, are sometimes murdered the next by the "People" themselves. Many were dumbfounded when, ousted from their roosts in the abandonment of the Capital, they ran up against the realities of Valencia and Barcelona where the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. had already taken control.

'Measures of Revolution'

'Two great revolutionary measures, both contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Constitution,' (I say! How about the 'Legitimate Government'?) 'are already in practice in many districts: the occupation of land by the peasants and the collectivization of industry. In July 60,000 peasants in the province of Badajoz seized the estates of 3000 landowners, many of whom perished.' ('Perished' is a word I like. Storm-at-sea effect.) 'Some weeks later, when the insurgent forces began their great march from Seville to Madrid, the boot went back to the other foot, and it was the turn of the peasants to disgorge or perish.' ('Perish' comes in nicely here, too.) 'In spite, or possibly because, of this terrible example, elsewhere in Jaen, La Mancha, all up the Levante coast and in Aragon, the landowners as a class have disappeared. The elderly are paupers, the able-bodied glad to earn a wage. A girl of eighteen is paid six pesetas (say a half-crown) a day working from dawn to dusk on her parents' estate. On Saturday nights she has to sweep out the village dance hall and the church where she was baptized. It would be dangerous to generalize from positive cases, but it is

safe to say that thousands of persons belonging to the non-proletarian classes are virtually enslaved . . . The Leaders of the Federation of Peasant Workers have called upon their followers to respect "genuine" peasant proprietors but to be vigilant lest a *kulak* spirit should spread. The peasant owners are to be won over to collectivization by "persuasion" and "example". In Catalonia on October 28th a decree was published by the Generalitat to eliminate "incomes not derived from labour", from Catalan economy. For this purpose an elaborate system of collectivization was set up. . . . The "Russia of the West", if it comes into being (and on many counts it is well on the way), will be different from the U.S.S.R. There will be, there is already, banditry, as in the early days of the Soviets, but above all there is in Spain the Anarchist spirit incorporated in the C.N.T. and F.A.I. as strongly in contradiction with Marxism as with Fascism.'

From all this you will see that *The Times* has seen fit to lift the veil for a moment (no more) and show Don Moses¹ at work, hewing and blasting out of the Spanish rock a Soviet Republic of the West. All pretence of the existence of a 'Legitimate Government' is dropped.

Democracy is at an end. Communist Dictatorship on the Russian model is in full swing: hampered as yet by the necessity to work in with the Anarchists and the other disruptive revolutionary sects. But they will be 'licked into shape' before long. 'Licked' is a good expression for

¹ Did you notice that they now call Don Moses 'Marcel'? Rather pretty. But I, for one, prefer his old name. On January 3rd he was 'Don Moses' for Garvin, and on January 9th he blossoms out as 'Marcel' in *The Times*. This civil war is quite complicated enough for a simple Englishman (who usually sticks through thick and thin to the name bestowed on him at birth, whether he likes it or not) without changing the names of the principal characters to suit the taste of newspaper readers.

what will happen if Don Moses finds himself face to face with the Anarchists, and no Franco to worry about any more.

Foreign politics as understood by Great Britain is so complex a game that no foreigner could ever hope to master its principles. And for the Englishman it is none too easy. But here you have the *fait accompli* of a 'Russia of the West', of a Bolshevized Spain, or rather half-Spain. It was hoped that it might be *all* Spain. But that is not now expected to materialize.

Well, Great Britain's allies point to this beautiful new paradise in the West, and say to her: 'You haven't got the heart have you to see all this destroyed by the brutal Franco?' And G. B., looking rather sheepish, lisps: 'No!' 'Besides', say France and Russia, popular-fronting in chorus, 'in point of fact you can't alter what is, it has gone too far.' And poor old G. B. (who feels none too sure of herself with these two toughs) assents. 'Yes,' she assents, 'I can see it's gone pretty far.' 'Well then,' say they in chorus, 'you're not going to allow Hitler to send enough of his horrid myrmidons into Spain to shatter this beautiful dream of liberty are you?'

At the dreaded name of 'Hitler' G. B. becomes transformed. She grows purple in the face: she clenches and unclenches her fists spasmodically. Her eyes flash fire. 'No,' she hisses, 'no! He *shall not pass*.' Flinging up her head, she bellows, in her best Spanish, her clenched fists raised aloft: '*No passara!*'

That has settled it! Hitler's name has worked the charm. La Belle France and the Soviet wink at each other. It is well known to these two cynical old harpies that all you have to do is to say 'Hitler', and poor old G. B. sees red. Indeed sees RED—just the colour they

want her to see. And she is *always* so angry now. For they never cease to say 'Hitler' to her, morning, noon and night. And, it is confidently predicted, in quarters usually well informed, that the day is not far distant when she will see Red *all the time*. In fact, *be* Red. And that will be very much more simple. One will not then have to go on with this wearisome Punch and Judy Show. One will be able to speak as one Comrade to another and cut the cackle.

THOUGHT ELEVEN

WHEN THE SERVANTS ARE
PRESENT

(Launcelot, 'over the nuts and wine', admits that our ally Russia is alone to blame: though he makes it quite clear that *Hoi Poloi* must never get so much as a hint of this. So keep it under your hat! As a loyal member of the Conservative Party Launcelot has considered it up to him to get a smattering at least of the Marxist philosophy. Since we are about to go to war to make the world safe for Communism, he felt it was up to him. He outlines the creed of Marx, and compares it with the creed of Baldwin, as that would work out, if left to itself.)

THOUGHT ELEVEN

WHEN THE SERVANTS ARE
PRESENT

My last Thought rather surprised me when I read it over. I didn't know I thought that way! It's a very singular thing, but until one begins Thinking Aloud and writing it all down, one doesn't know what one *does* think. All kinds of Thoughts come up that we didn't know were there. If you thought aloud *systematically*, and put it all down, you'd find that.

Of course what I thought in my last Thought couldn't be broadcast. I mean it would never do to say that to *Hoi Poloi*. That is perfectly understood. To all intents and purposes and *when the servants are present*, so to speak, Franco is just an objectionable outlaw, with whom His Majesty's Government can have no truck.

We clubmen (to make use for convenience of the disgusting transatlantic expression) get our orders just like an army. If we don't go down to the F.O. every morning like a newspaper wallah, we nevertheless pass the word along. It reaches us somehow—bush-telegraph effect. The London clubs are the 'Officers' Mess'. What's written in the newspapers is mainly for *Hoi Poloi*. I read the damned things; but I know its all servants' hall gossip at bottom. The paper hacks themselves say that their papers are for taxicab drivers. They are.

So over the nuts and wine, it may be frankly admitted that our dear old friend and ally Russia *is* to blame.

There is no blinking that fact. She *has* been very naughty. As *The Times* told her not so long ago, in an ill-tempered burst of outspokenness. She (Russia) had made no secret, months beforehand, of her intention to set up a Soviet Republic in Spain. Travellers returning from Moscow brought back detailed accounts of what was going forward. All was in readiness. A date had been fixed. Everything was to occur according to plan. Sotelo was on the death-list—he had to be got out of the way, he was the brains of the Right. (If the Right had any brains, they would be terribly dangerous.)

But the coup miscarried. A counter-revolution broke out just before the revolution was due to start. The old Bolshies in Spain bungled it. And Russia's as sore as anything. No wonder.

As to Franco, he is the scapegoat. In no *moral* sense the culprit, whatever he may be in a political, or diplomatic, sense. And he is as innocent of 'Fascism' (or *was*, for he may be a bit of a Fascist by this time) as Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Pollitt. That has to be rubbed in.

It is common knowledge that eighty per cent of the present members of the House of Commons would vote for Communism in Spain, if it lay between Communism and Fascism. For their orders are absolutely unambiguous and precise. There can be no mistaking them. Their orders are that they are to support the Devil Incarnate, should an issue arise in which the choice lies between Hitler and the Devil. And such issues seem to be cropping up every day now. There is no country where Hitler and the Devil are not apt to turn up, briskly sparring, at any minute.

These are their orders. They are an obedient lot. Manageable, quiet, and far better drilled than the Reichstag, in spite of what anyone may say about that overrated body. Why, the Reichstag are a fiery lot of individualists compared to our crowd! This is what Ned always says and I'm damned if I'm not beginning to think he is right.

As to the twenty per cent who would *not* vote for a Soviet Republic (in Spain, Poland, Bulgaria, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, anywhere except England) they are, at least, a *quiet* lot too. You cannot say that they are noisy. Or truculent. Have you heard from any side or quarter of the House a *single* remark suggestive of so much as a sneaking sympathy for Franco? I have not. The English have never been so united, from Baldwin to Pollitt. It is an inspiring spectacle. And it required a great Englishman like Stanley Baldwin to weld them together into this more than Reichstaglike cohesion.

They think of nothing but Foreign Affairs. Why should they? Home politics are always uphill work and one's apt to burn one's fingers if one goes messing about the hearths of the Poor. Our parliament are absolutely at one—except that the Left would declare war on the Fascist countries *to-morrow*, whereas the Baldwinians give us to understand they can't do so for eighteen months. My word, Baldwin's slow, but he's *sure!* He's like the mills of God.

Of course, if I could be positive that I were speaking to a gentleman (or rather that I were thinking aloud before a gentleman) I could perhaps go even further than I have and admit that in some respects I had a slight twinge of misgiving about the Leader's policy. (I refer to Mr. Baldwin naturally. *Our* Leader. I should have

employed the German word *Fuhrer* had I meant the cad at Berchtesgaden). Baldwinian politics are not exactly my pigeon and that's a fact. I am sorry that we have picked a Leader who is not able always to stand up to the *News Chronicle*.

(This is *really* Thinking Aloud. You do understand?)

It's damn clever I know to make use of the Soviet to smash old Hitler. For of course there is no other imaginable or conceivable reason for our Franco-Russian alliance. It's only possible rationale is to crush Hitler. But—there is such a great big awkward BUT.

Actually I must confess that I am *not* as easy in my mind as all that. There are so many *buts*. In short, *I ha' me doots* as Mr. Micawber would say. I cannot see that Hitler, unsavoury as he is (a good adjective that—thank you Mr. Gunther for *Inside Europe*—thank you for 'unsavoury') need dominate *everything*: need overshadow the 'Distressed Areas', harness us to the Comintern, engage us in all Europe's quarrels, cause us to give Russia a *carte blanche* in Asia, in brief all that our present policy entails.

Look at Abyssinia! Who was it said that Addis Ababa was 'a circuitous route to Berlin?' Some writer fellow. But by gad sir, he put his finger on the spot! We should never have got into that Italo-Abyssinian mess if we hadn't wanted to work up feeling about 'Fascism' and wanted to get the public used to getting indignant about 'Dictatorship' and its wicked ways.

Ned is causing me to acquire a perfect library of books. *Left Wings Over Europe* was the name of that book where the feller said about Addis Ababa being the road to Berlin. This was followed a few weeks afterwards by another book where I read the same thing. *Walks and*

Talks Abroad. This was by an M.P. He is Sir Arnold Wilson. Rather brainy but a sound feller all the same. And one of them couldn't have taken the idea from the other, the books came out one on top of the other. But anyway, it wasn't Sir Arnold that said this. He was only repeating what they told him in Italy.

I'll cut out a bit of this *Walks and Talks* book to prove I haven't made it up. He was in Italy while Sanctions were going on. Here it is.

'Sanctions are hurting Italy: they are hurting us too, though, as the schoolboy said to his mother, "not in the same place". What hurts more are the phrases attributed to British statesmen in this connection: "Sanctions are an experiment" said Sir. S. Hoare. "So we", reply Italians, "are to be vivisected on the table at Geneva as a demonstration of your powers." As Mr. Anthony Eden is credited with having said that the object of sanctions was "to strangle Italy", and that the proceedings of the League, under the presidency of Mr. Litvinoff, were a "full-dress rehearsal" of the great parade of force which must some day be brought to bear on Germany, Italians reply . . . that if the object was to teach Germany, it has been attained: Germany has learned not to allow herself to be thus caught, and is quickly taking steps to accumulate vital supplies.'

But is Hitler so important as all that—to *us*? I mean aren't we a little obsessed with Hitler? We as a nation, all said and done, are not the *News Chronicle* or the *Daily Worker*. This seems almost like a jibe. I withdraw it. But all the same I am not satisfied that we are not suffering from a bee in our bonnet. And it is not *our* bee either. None of its honey will ever get into *our* hive.

I follow my Leader. Need I say that? It would be pre-

sumptuous of me to question that leadership or scrutinize it in too great detail, however paradoxical. But I cannot help, as I look out of my club window sometimes at the windows of the club opposite, asking myself privately whether our eminent Leader has not made a slight mistake. Bad discipline I know. But there you are!

Had I been called upon to provide the Leadership for this great commonwealth of nations—damn it, even when I'm Thinking Aloud I can't get out of this Hansard way of expressing myself!—had I been where Old Sealed Lips is (damn it all why *shouldn't* I say it!) I should of course have come to an understanding with Franco right at the beginning. I should have refused, politely but very firmly, to go in with Paris and do my best with the French and Russians to stop Franco winning. I should on the contrary have seen to it that he *did* win.

We scarcely had any choice. It was the only way. Our lot would have won. It would have been we Englishmen who had done it: we should have had a pro-British Spain for future use. Gibraltar would have been as safe as houses. As it is, it is as unsafe as Malta. Indeed more so. First Baldwin (quite unnecessarily) enrages Mussolini. Then he puts up the back of all decent Spaniards—of the people who, *in spite of us*, are going to be masters of Spain.

That is the *common sense* of this crisis. But do not let us talk of common sense, where Baldwin's treatment of Foreign Policy is concerned.

On the other hand there is Blum. He has to be considered. Or so we are told. We *must* support Blum. All my friends tell me in confidence that the British Government cannot afford to let Blum fall, because if Blum fell there would be a revolution in France.

Now Ned says this is just plain nonsense. He says that

our Government just *say* that to justify this pro-Red policy of theirs in Spain. He says that France has gone more and more to the Right (as the Lamoureux election proved) since Blum has been at the helm, and eventually the French will drive him out of their own accord, however much we bolster him up. A few communists might be shot by Mobile Guards in demonstrations. But *Revolution!* That is just terrorism and blackmail! So says Ned. And I'm pretty sure for once he's speaking sober sense. It must be a new sensation for old Ned! How then do we stand?

We stand to lose a lot. We are doing Great Britain a great deal of harm. However much harm we may one day do Hitler, we are, in the meanwhile, quite recklessly harming ourselves. Every month we have more States against us: all because of our Marxist boy friend, Litvinov. Portugal, our 'oldest ally', is against us. Italy, in spite of 'pacts', never will forgive us for trying to throttle her. Even our 'friends', France and Russia, abuse us like a pickpocket if we refuse to do exactly what they tell us.

As a staunch supporter of the National Government I say it. I cannot quite reconcile with my conservative principles this love of his old age—Russian Communism: Mr. Baldwin has got me beat. There is an *international* smack about the whole thing, that I don't like.

Does it really mean that *one* sort of Internationalism breeds another sort as well? Does it follow, that if you listen too much to one sort of internationalist (he of the High Finance racket) you lend an ear more easily afterwards to *other* varieties of internationalist (he, for instance, of the Hammer and Sickle)? You sort of get used to the internationalist atmosphere perhaps. A lot of things that would otherwise seem a little odd to you—such as the

pogroms of the non-Marxists in Madrid—no longer seem quite so peculiar. Is that it?

It's a problem that's too big for me. Is there a new sort of *cosmopolitan patriotism*? A new sort of patriotism altogether that I haven't got the hang of? Is Mr. Baldwin the first great patriot of Cosmopolis? Is he as near to a Chink or Jew as he is to *me*? I wish I knew. I hate to doubt my Leader.

I know that we are 'an Empire people'. At least since Disraeli taught us to be we are an Empire people. We weren't that before.

As a good conservative I know that Disraelian Imperialism did tend to *internationalize* the Englishman. To 'think imperially' is to 'think internationally', in some sense.

I think internationally as hard as I can. But the old patriotism will come breaking in. The *Civis romanus* notion led to the hybridization of Imperial Rome. The internationalization of the Roman and the decadence of the imperial city set in; with the pauperization of the old Roman stock, who were better soldiers or colonial administrators than they were stockjobbers.

Disraeli's patent jingo Briton, in theory accepting as a brother the Bush-boy, the Bengalee, the Black Jamaican, has made it easier for England to be run as an international concern. For we are run as an international concern, I suppose, and 'Briton' means something a little comic: a great deal more than, but also something very different from, an Englishman.

A nasty, difficult subject. But since we are unmasking a little bit before proceeding, let us just glance at the credentials of our new ally Soviet Russia. I mean let us see what the religion is we are committed to help her put

across apparently—to-day in Spain, to-morrow in Greece, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc. etc. etc. There is no end, until all, *except us*, are Sovietized.

You will have taken my measure I expect by now. So I have no need to inform you that what I am about to say is not my own. It is all stolen straight out of old Ned's noddle, to which I quite shamelessly turn whenever at a loss. And God knows I am at a loss just now.

Still I did think that as a loyal member of the Conservative Party in the year of grace 1937 it was up to me to get at least a smattering of the Marxist philosophy. Indeed I felt I should be a bit of a humbug if I didn't. I had to acquaint myself with the rudiments of the creed, after all, which is playing such a big part in our policies everywhere at present. And I flatter myself that if I have not read *Das Kapital* from cover to cover (which, Heaven forbid that I should be asked to do, and if the Conservative Office decreed it I would declare a stay-in strike on the spot, and shut myself in the club smoking-room—clenching my fist à la Marx out of the club window to show I was not *really* insubordinate) at least I have grasped the rudiments of our ally's Red Bible.

I have spoken of Marx's Holy writ. What is it exactly? Well, frankly it is a lot of inflated and out-of-date junk, nothing more, as all Holy Writ is if you ask me.

What it mainly says is that the Industrial Revolution must change society from top to bottom. It must convert it inexorably into a big Americanized mass-state. No appeal against this 'evolutionist' destiny. Man invents the machine: and since he cannot uninvent the damned thing, and since he hasn't the horse-sense or merely canine cunning to dominate the bally object, *it* must

dominate him. He has to make all his arrangements accordingly, with that taken for granted. That he is the *underdog* namely. It's called 'planning' usually, this.

Marx proves without any difficulty at all that 'Capitalism'—the unrestricted cut-throat system of competitive Finance, bound up with the principles of Liberal Democracy—cannot work to-day and will get itself more and more inextricably entangled in its antiquated usurious money-system, until everybody is starving, except for a handful of all-powerful millionaires and their fat families. Then it will bust. Usury upon such a portentous scale begets beggary upon an equally portentous scale. And there's the end of it. Don't let's wait till we're all skeletons, says Marx. Let's bust it before it busts itself.

So far so good. Every intelligent person has always agreed with old Marx up to this point, except for the 'catastrophe'. (That was a bit of the Apocalypse that had got into economics where it does not belong. Marx couldn't help himself.) And to-day it is being proved to the letter how the unrestricted usurious operations of loan-capital (though that wasn't the way Marx put it) must come a crash. Of course it must—unless it had within itself some intelligent principle of adaptation, which it hasn't. That's obvious enough. It is without heart or intelligence, like a huge senseless insect. Hence of course the 'Distressed Areas'.

What Marx would put in its place is just *more* Capitalism, only State-capitalism this time. More machinery, more 'Americanism', more servile-state conditions: only all run by a bureaucratic class instead of by a 'capitalist class'. All would be suffused with a beautiful pink light, of bogus salvation. An æsthetic advantage, possibly; but otherwise scarcely distinguishable.

Instead of the immense revolution caused by the super-technique of industry making everybody a 'toff', Marx would have it make everybody into a 'class-conscious' helot. A 'proletarian', he called it.

This was somewhat because he was an old snob. The worst sort of snob too, an intellectual snob, as well as a social. (You can't have one without the other.) Somewhat also because he was an innate despot. The oriental strain, what! Far from being repelled by the idea of the unprecedented power he was conferring upon an oligarchical class, he rubbed his hands over it. His sort, too, he felt sure, would be on top.

Mr. Baldwin and Marx are not so dissimilar as they seem at first sight. This is the difference. Baldwinian politics, taken to their ultimate and logical conclusion, would land us *all* in 'Distressed Area' conditions. It might take another twenty or thirty years. Marxian politics, on the other hand, would lock us all up in a huge Port Sunlight, with a Salvation Army band playing in every quadrangle a godless 'Hymn of Hate'. *La haine créatrice* Jaurès calls it. But at bottom there would be no great difference.

THOUGHT TWELVE

THIS UGLY VENDETTA
AGAINST GERMANY—
WHERE WILL IT LEAD US?

(Launcelot thinks he must be going bolshie, as a consequence of his Thinking Aloud. He can't understand it. But Ned comes in, and reassures him. Then Ned talks about the bias shown by the British Government for the Marxist side in Spain, and even asserts that the British Government must be held responsible for much that has happened there. Why should Great Britain behave in that way? 'To what mad extremes is this insensate policy of "German Encirclement"', this ugly vendetta, going to lead us, before we have done?' he asks. In conclusion he lays it down that 'Russian transports in the port of Barcelona to-day, means Russian transports in the Port of London to-morrow.')

THOUGHT TWELVE

THIS UGLY VENDETTA AGAINST
GERMANY—WHERE WILL IT LEAD
US?

My last Thought was a bit over the odds. I seem in the course of this Thinking Aloud game to be going Bolshie or something. I can't make it out. 'When he thinks he is a child,' said some great man about another. Lord Byron I think it was who was the child. When *I* think aloud it seems to have the opposite effect.

It must be that I'm psychic. It isn't always me speaking. Sometimes I'm damned if I don't reel off whole chunks of Thoughts of old Ned's. Not that I mind picking his brains if he's got more than I have, and far more than's good for him. Communism, what!

I don't know what steps Don Moses takes about brains. Nature is a 'bourgeois', as the Don would call it. She gives *Kulak* brains to one person, and common or garden brains to another. And she won't change them, once she's done it. She won't water down one brain, and put a bit of dick into another. And *we* haven't found out how to do it.

I suppose the only way to reach any decent equality is to wipe out all those with superior thinking-boxes—all except those like Don Moses who rule the roost. They just *have* to have a few extra wits. Otherwise no revolu-

tion would ever get very far I'm afraid. Once I begin thinking about these things I get more and more confused and I must say not a little disturbed. And the conversations I have had with Ned lately have done nothing to mend matters. He's as anti-Baldwin as he can be, though he says Baldwin's an honest enough old buffer, only just living in another age.

Ned said my last Thought was *some* Thought. He stamped about gasping with laughter when I read it to him. Then he went all grave and worried. It's quite his worst trick. He solemnly congratulated me and said I was becoming some Big Thinker. But he said that I didn't quite see yet where all my excogitations led.

'Once', he said, 'you admit this principle, that the Soviet can prepare and foment a revolution, as they did quite openly in Spain, and then when the civil war breaks out, intervene, with hundreds of war-planes and all the rest of it, upon the side of the Communist faction; then you have admitted a principle which is going to lead you very far. Much farther than you want to go.'

'But the British Government has not admitted that principle, Ned,' I answered.

'It looks as if it had', said he, 'doesn't it? They knew what Russia was getting ready to do beforehand. When the Terror started in Madrid they did not protest. They sent Mr. Ogilvie Forbes there—lest it should be thought that Great Britain did not approve of what was going on, I suppose. He was photographed with the marxist militiamen. Hands across the sea! The Red Empire of the Hammer and Sickle, and the Empire on which the Sun Never Sets. For months he was on the spot: he knew what was going forward. The Government paper, *The Times*, described how the *Frente Popular* Government was power-

less: how Committees of Public Safety had been set up all over the place, and how, before these self-appointed tribunals, thousands of unfortunate people were dragged, after being seized by armed bands in their homes; how they were sentenced and summarily shot. Thousands of them, not hundreds. The Morgue was packed every day with fresh corpses. Did the accredited representative of Great Britain on the spot protest? Did he lift a finger to restrain this "grim enthusiasm"? Would it not have been sufficient for Great Britain to threaten to withdraw her diplomatic representatives from Spain, and to withdraw from all association with France and Russia, if these massacres continued? Do you doubt for a moment that we could have stopped them? The mere hint of such action would have been sufficient. It was we who provided all that with a cloak of respectability.'

'But how about our socialists and pacifists?' I objected.

'Our pacifists! But do you pretend that a pacifist—even a pacifist—would have the effrontery to come forward and object to this senseless butchery being brought to a sudden stop? Could even the "Friends of Russia" have objected? Or if they had, would ninety per cent of the people of England—if they had been told the truth, as it was known to our Government—have supported the outcry in favour of this monstrous inhumanity? Would they not have supported Mr. Baldwin as one man, in his compassionate action? What rhyme or reason was there to condone all these stupid horrors? Is it not a blot on the name of England that England should have connived at them, have allowed it to be understood that England favoured their perpetrators, and our representative assisted at them in some sort? To what mad extremes is this insensate policy of "German Encirclement", this

ugly vendetta, going to lead us next, if it drives us into such dishonourable courses as those? We know that what happened in Russia at the time our present friends seized power is taboo, we must not mention it: or if we did so it would be met with a yawn. It is a distant chapter of history. But *this* has been happening at our very doors. Yet we have stood by and watched it with our hands in our pockets, or we have deliberately looked the other way. We *must* adopt a responsible attitude: nations with whom we are allied, to whom we lend money, must be informed that to foment and carry through gigantic massacres is not according to our standards of humanity. We cannot stand by and see the days of Sardanapalus brought back in the twentieth century.'

'I agree Ned that *some* action might have been taken. But England has not the authority she had.'

'Nor will have any left at all by the time she is finished, nor will be anything but a country execrated by all those who are fighting for their freedom against the Soviet Imperialist octopus, which has set out to strangle the world, or bleed it white, enslave and rule it.'

'Hold on Ned! It isn't only the rebels who think they are fighting for freedom!'

'I know that. And the libertarian syndics of Spain will find when it is too late that they have been fooled just as the poor dreamy babies of Russians found they had been fooled. The Spanish *Anarchisto* has one conception of "freedom", and Don Moses quite another. There is not any one and indivisible "freedom", that is an illusion. When men utter the great word "freedom" they are moved to tears—they rush forward to die for it upon a barricade. It is very noble. Baldwin is very noble. Baldwin is a true child of Byron. But Byron knew no

better. He had only seen the French Revolution, and didn't know much about that. But we know better than he did—all except our Baldwins, who are unteachable. All Europe to-day, all intelligent Europe, is disillusioned. All except us. If Mr. Baldwin were a younger man he would be less Byronic. In the upshot freedom gets dimmer and dimmer the more you do about it. The liberty-mongers have one idea of freedom and their cannon-fodder another.'

'That is damn true, Ned. *Hoi Poloi* don't know which side their bread is buttered.'

Ned stopped a moment, and laughed a little nastily, I thought. He always laughs when I mention *Hoi Poloi*.

'No, but England!' he shouted. 'You fool, don't you see what we're doing with England—to leave the poor devils in Spain out of account! Admit this principle, and you tie England to a programme of massacre all over Europe. If the Comintern is allowed to send its agents into any country it chooses—and already they are everywhere—and then dispatch military forces after them to support a revolution, once allow this and you will find that the extreme Left in every country will grow daily more enterprising and arbitrary; and when, against its invasions of democratic liberty (which you affect to prize) the oppressed "opposition" rise and *rebel* (become automatically "rebels", for our splendid B.B.C.) Russia will step in with its limitless resources, and crush the hostile faction. That is, half the nation. At last it will be our turn. For I tell you that Russian transports in the port of Barcelona to-day, means Russian transports in the Port of London to-morrow. Or at Grimsby or at Harwich. Do you want that? Launcelot, do you or do you not want that? Speak Launcelot!'

Put to me in that way I was somewhat in a quandary. For as a loyal supporter of the National Government I could hardly say that I should resent it if our great ally Russia so far honoured us as to send a ship of war to our shores, at a moment of crisis, to encourage with its presence a popular movement. Not a *pukka* popular movement.

'As a conservative, yes,' I stoutly answered. 'As a private person, no.'

Ned grinned at me so ferociously that I took a step back in some alarm. I thought for the moment that he might not be quite *non compos mentis*.

'Launcelot, you make me despair. You'll be the death of me yet.'

'I hope not Ned,' I said. 'We can't afford to lose you Ned. You certainly add to the gaiety of nations.'

This was a sly dig at his Irish streak.

'They can do with a bit more gaiety,' he answered.

THOUGHT THIRTEEN

COLONEL BLIMP

(Thinking Aloud next day in his club, Launcelot is awakened by Colonel Blimp, who is particularly indignant at what he has overheard. Launcelot denounces Colonel Blimp—as he believes him to be—for sitting for his portrait to Mr. David Low. He says he won't have nude colonels in the club. 'The old boy's letting us all down!' he tells Ned. The supposed Colonel Blimp retaliates.)

THOUGHT THIRTEEN

COLONEL BLIMP

I've been Thinking Aloud ever since I had that last talk with Ned. And as a matter of fact I got into hot water rather over it. For I was talking away to myself in my club just now and I shouted out:

'Russian troopships in the Port of London! Well what of it? I can see no fundamental objection!'

But I found I had woken up the most perfect Colonel Blimp you ever saw who had been asleep in the next armchair to mine. He was sitting up as stiff as a poker, and staring at me as if I'd called out *Cad* or something awful.

'What of it sir!' he thundered. 'What of it? Is that what you think about it, sir! Russian troopships in the Port of London, indeed! I shall report you, sir, to the club secretary! I knew your father, sir. He was the whitest man I ever met! If he could have heard what you've just said he'd have turned in his grave, sir. Turned in his grave! I have had my eye on you for some time. But I never expected *that*.'

I was quite incapable of speech for some seconds or minutes. And when I had recovered myself the Colonel was gone. Thinking aloud decidedly has its drawbacks. And at bottom of course it was all Ned's fault.

I do think Low's cartoons are clever. His 'Colonel

Blimp' is about the most mirth-making character I've ever seen and there are scores of old buffers in my club who might have sat for their portrait to him. He couldn't do that all out of his head.

I expect he's one of these unsavoury¹ artist-fellows. But all the same he makes me laugh. That's a bit of a feat. I'm not what you'd call a *promiscuous* laugher. I don't laugh to order, I may say. I take my laughing seriously!

That old buffer's name is Pauncefoot-Runt. I've got the lowdown on him from the secretary. Lt.-Col. Robert Pauncefoot-Runt, C.M.G., D.S.O. Now I wonder if he is the original of Colonel Blimp?

The moustaches would have to be damped, to make them droop. But the steam would do that, in the Baths. This black-and-white artist-wallah seems to have come across him in a Turkish Bath, of all places.

When he's stripped Runt must be terribly like Blimp. Especially seen from the rear. I believe the old boy is Blimp, I'm damned if I don't. Blimp with his moustaches on end, clothed and in his right mind!

What if I threaten him with exposure! Why not? He threatens me. I'll threaten him!

I'd say to him I didn't like having nude colonels in the club. I'd say it wasn't done. I'd say his sitting for his portrait undressed was caddish behaviour and unworthy of the uniform he must once have worn. Besides, he's getting the club a bad name. I'd say I'd noticed the club servants lately had been showing less respect. Can one wonder?—Why of course: the night porter, the drunken old wretch, knocked one of the members about the other day! (I've made a point of being pretty civil to Wicks ever since I heard about it!)

¹ Thank you Mr. Gunther. (Ed.)

I shall burst in on the secretary and say the country's going to the dogs, and that it's Blimp that's doing it! I shall say I said nothing about it before because I didn't wish to give the poor old boy away if I could help it, but now it's got past a joke.

I really think I've got old Runt by the short hairs. This is capital fun. I'll get Ned to complain of him at the same time and one or two other members. I'll get up a proper shemozzle about this Blimp business. It *may* get into the papers, even.

By jove though, I believe we can get him turned out of the club. What fun that would be! For making an exhibition of himself in the *Evening Standard*!

The shameless old hussy! That'll teach him to tick off junior members when they're Thinking Aloud, what!

Just now as I was writing this down Ned blew in, smoking a Régie cigarette as usual. He was firing the smoke out of his nostrils, like a lackadaisical dragon.

He dragged up a chair and sank into it, sighing slightly.

'Thinkin' Aloud, Launce, as ever?' he said, in his languid drawl.¹

I sent out for a copy of the *Standard*. It was Saturday, and there sure enough was our old friend Runt shadow-boxing with his caricaturist-crone, who always puts himself in—I suppose to show he's on Turkish Bath terms with military toffs, as he imagines them. All these artist fellows are fearful snobs.

'Recognize him?' I asked Ned, pointing to Colonel Blimp.

Ned looked at Colonel Blimp rather superciliously but a little blankly.

¹ Launcelet had evidently been reading Van Dine. Hence this regrettable confusion of my personality with that of Philo Vance. (Ed.)

I pointed at Blimp again.

'Ever seen him before?'

'I have,' said Ned. 'What's the idea old man?'

'I mean *the original*, Ned!'

Ned is awfully quick at the uptake, especially as regards me: there's a lot of telepathy where he and me's concerned. When his face lights up he looks ten years younger, and the truth dawned on him now, I could see. He looked thirty odd, not a day older.

'Now I see what you're asking me!' he said smiling, as his teeth flashed in his sunburnt face.¹ 'No Launce. There *is* no original.'

'No?' I was sarcastic. I looked at him steadily.

He poked his finger down disdainfully upon Blimp's bottle-nose.

'This is like Belcher's charladies,' he drawled. 'It's purely conventional.'

'How do you mean?' I don't always understand Ned the first time.

'An old stage prop. Every caricaturist inherits those "Old Colonels" along with his other stock-in-trade. Alcoholic Chars, Champagne Charlies, Hubbies who've lost their latchkeys, Girls who took the Wrong Turning, Captains of Industry, Simpering Curates, Irate Generals, Old Sealed Lips . . .'

'Please Ned! Must you drag in . . . ?'

'Sorry old man. I forgot Baldwin was your Führer!'

'Anyhow Ned', I went on (after I had shown him that there were certain subjects I barred), 'the papers say that Blimp is a "great creation". I read it only yesterday.'

¹ It is quite evident, I think, that Launcelot had been taking lessons in literary composition. Almost certainly Van Dine. (Ed.)

Ned laughed, and took another Régie cigarette out of his superb tortoiseshell case—a present from Signor Mussolini or Kemal Atatürk.

'A great creation! What an innocent you are! That's only because Mr. David Low's thrown in his lot with the Popular Front, and everything Left-Wingers do is "a great creation", as a matter of course. Didn't you know that?'

'Is it?' I contented myself with saying.

'Of course, didn't you know? It is like the Nobel Prize. It's always given to some particularly bloodthirsty pacifist; of unimpeachable Left-Wing principles.'

'I don't know anything about that,' I said. I was considerably damped of course, but I did not show it.

'Of course you don't. You don't read your *Beach-comber* every morning. He's fifty times funnier than all this old pantomime of Mr. Low's. Why look at it again, you old goose. It's what every provincial apothecaries-help, who's read a bit of Shaw and Joad, thinks "Old Colonels" are like.'

'What is Joad?' I asked.

'Never mind. It doesn't matter I assure you. No, Mr. Low is the Phil May of the Depression. And what's more he really *believes* in Blimp. He thinks he's important. A power in the land. Why he would think *you* were important, my poor old Launce, if he knew you! I assure you he would. A power in the land, he thinks we all are. Heaven help him! Lord Tomnoddy impresses him tremendously. Low is thirty years behind the times. He belongs to the age of the old copies of *Punch*—he is in a word, provincial. He thinks he is "taking off" a lot of swells. He does not see through his Blimps for a moment and realize the helpless old cabbages they really are. He

believes they rule him. He actually believes that. He thinks he's poking fun at his *masters*. And they think he is too, that's the funny part about it. They inhabit the same fool's paradise, Blimp and Low. Low or this little figure of Low, is the shadow of Blimp, both wrapped in the steamy unreality of a Turkish Bath. That is symbolic! Low and Blimp, for better or for worse, are one.'

'So you think that Blimp is unreal!' I said.

'As unreal as you are Launcelot!' he laughed, and delicately withdrew another Régie cigarette from his imposing fag-box.

'That's where you're wrong Ned!' I cried. I was positive of it. He was being clever, that was all. 'I've seen him. I've seen him here. In this club!'

Ned opened his eyes in some surprise, but laughed as usual.

'And I think', I said, 'that the old boy ought to be jolly well ashamed of himself, sitting for his portrait like that. What's more I'm going to report him! A member of a club like this should have *some* restraint, and—er—consideration for other members. I mean to say it's a bit over the odds, what! At his time of life too!'

Ned hooted with laughter. His Régie cigarette dropped to the floor, and as he coughed with merriment he stamped upon it.

'It's not a laughing matter Ned,' I told him somewhat reproachfully. 'This old boy is letting us all down. I, for one, am not going to stand for it!'

At that moment Pauncefoot-Runt came into the room. We eyed each other for a little in silence, for he saw me at once. Then I turned to Ned.

'That is the man I mean,' I said. 'Will you back me up if I make a complaint to him here and now? There is

no time like the present. I'm going to take the bull by the horns.'

Without waiting for an answer, I rose and went over to where Pauncefoot-Runt had sat down. Holding open the copy of the *Evening Standard* I had in my hand, I pointed to the picture of Colonel Blimp.

'Have you any explanation, sir, to offer regarding that?' I was perfectly calm. I flatter myself I broached the painful subject with considerable dignity.

'Explanation, sir? What are you driving at, sir?' he snorted.

'Do you affect ignorance, sir, am I to understand, of what goes on in the pages of this paper? Do you realize that you are letting down the members of this club, by lending yourself weekly to this unseemly parade of your person, in a popular sheet, as the nude model' (I said 'lewd model' and then corrected myself) 'to this artist-fellow?'

The old boy stared at me in speechless high dudgeon for several minutes. He was trembling from head to foot, his face growing redder and redder, until I really expected him to end by throwing a fit. But at that moment what I can only describe as a prolonged falsetto *whoop*, like a cry of inhuman anguish, shattered the silence of the smoking-room. It was Ned. He had been hovering in my rear, and now was rushing headlong from the room, in the direction of the lavabo.

Colonel Blimp (as I am positive he is) sprang to his feet as if he had been shot, and as if he had never heard of Aix-les-Bains. Seizing me by the throat, the old ruffian shook me until I was able to gasp out 'help!' and several members, who had rushed towards us, dragged him off.

'You infernal young puppy!' he was roaring. 'I'll

shake the life out of you! Do you hear me, sir! If you think you can insult me with impunity, you young cub, you are mistaken. Dash it sir! I'll—I'll—wring your neck for you!

The old boy must be blind among other things, he can't have seen my two white hairs, upon my left temple! As I was forty, or was it forty-one, last week, 'young cub' was a bit flattersome what!—Not that *he* meant it to be that.

I felt rather groggy. The old devil had got his thumb on my windpipe, and another half-minute 'Madame Tabouis' might have had to make way on the front page of the evening papers for 'Clubman murdered in the smoking-room of his club.'—I slumped into an arm-chair and was not sorry when someone brought me a stiff brandy and soda.

THOUGHT FOURTEEN

HITLER

(Ned points out to Launcelot that political lampoons can be dangerous, if mistaken for the reality, by quixotic Sancho Panzas.—Hitler makes another speech, which Launcelot thinks about, as in duty bound. He decides that 'we can't stand by and see one country treated by another in the way Germany does Russia—calling her a "bolshie" and all the rest of it.' We shall jolly well have to go to war with her if she won't accept Russia as a friend!)

THOUGHT FOURTEEN

HITLER

HITLER's just made a speech. He might have spared his breath, as Ned said when I saw him just now, for all the good it does. It only irritates us.

Ned apologized, by the way, for forsaking me and leaving me to the tender mercies of Colonel Blimp, but said that had he remained he would have died of laughing. To this I replied that I might very well have died too, but of strangulation. If public-spirited club members had not come to my assistance I might actually be dead.

Ned looked at me long and hard.

'Yes, you *will* get killed one of these days, as a result of your obtuseness. If you go on insulting that bugaboo of yours across the North Sea, for instance, one fine day *he* will take you by the throat too and wring your neck for you.'

'I don't know what you mean.' I thought he had behaved rather shabbily and I was at no pains to conceal it.

'Listen to my parable,' said he. 'You are the British Sancho Panza. But the Knight of La Mancha has recovered his reason; whereas you have lost yours. You've changed places with the Don.'

'Franco do you mean? Or Don Moses?'

'Neither.'

'You're always suggesting I'm up the pole.'

'So you are. Where Quixote mistook windmills for giants, you do the opposite. You mistake giants for windmills, or "windbags", which is worse. You will get a death-blow, if you don't take yourself in hand.'

'I know what you think, Ned. I am quite aware of what you think.'

'Well isn't it true? Look what has just happened to you! You have no vestige left of that old much-esteemed British sagacity. You are a booby, sir!'

'I know I am not *brainy*,' I said pointedly.

'It's much worse than that. You've reached the point at which you mistake living people for political cartoons. You are taken in by your own cartoonist! And when the "cartoon" gets up and nearly throttles you, you are dismayed and astonished. You will be still more dismayed and astonished yet!'

'What—*more* Blimps on my track!'

'There are *other* cartoons done by Mr. David Low, besides those of Colonel Blimp, my dear Launcelot! They are no more real, however. If you mistake the insolent scrawlings of this unintelligent lampoonist *for the truth*, you will get a nasty shock. One of these laughable lampoons will, one of them, when you least expect it, spring up, as did the pseudo "Colonel Blimp", and you will learn your mistake too late!'

'You mean Hitler I suppose?' I said smiling. For I always laugh at old Ned, who has a slight weakness for Hitler.

'I mean what you *think* is Hitler.'

However I must get back, I suppose, to Hitler, whose speech was most disappointing. The fellow *will* not *col-*

laborate. That's the trouble. He will not make a *contribution to peace*. He will insist that the Russians are Bolshies.

There is one thing I noticed after *this* speech though. I was rather surprised. England says she perfectly believes Herr Hitler when he says he does not wish to attack her. I'd never heard England say that before. France also says she is quite sure, at last, that Germany does not intend to attack *her*. As to Belgium and Holland, he has promised never to lay a finger on *them*. So of course you might say that settles it.

All this is rather new. It was always said until this time that Hitler was going to bomb *all* of us. What we seem to think now is that it's only Russia he intends to bomb.

But *collaborate* he will not. By his *collaborating* we mean that he won't forget Russia is there. And he will insist that there's something peculiar about the régime there. We think of course that there's something peculiar about *his*. He insists that Russia isn't straight—doesn't even pretend to be. But the more he says Russia isn't straight, the more we say *he* isn't straight. He gets a bit peeved sometimes about this. But we go on telling him he's crooked all the same, in the hope that *in the end* he will collaborate.

Russia is the rock on which we all split. Hitler says he doesn't want to attack the Soviet, but he doesn't want to have anything to do with it. We reply that he *must* want to attack it, otherwise he would agree to defend it. He replies that does not follow. He says he has no desire to defend it. He does not like it or trust it. Furthermore, he will defend *himself* against it. Both against its armies, and against its agitators within his own gates. And he will go on cutting their heads off.

Ned says it's absurd to try and force a country to enter

into an alliance it doesn't like with another country. He says all the pressure we bring to bear on Hitler, morning, noon and night, about this, is absurd. Ned says we're unfriendly to Hitler because our system knows its days are numbered and it doesn't want to die in its bed. Some people says it's the Jews who won't let us be friendly with Germany, some say it's the Communists, some say it's the Bishops, some say it's the French, some say it's Blum because he's a Jew; and finally some say that we are friendly with Germany, much too friendly, only we pretend not to be (we're so terribly cunning) for fear we should be cut by Blum the next time he meets us, and that the *News Chronicle* would hoist the Red Flag. I just think, for my part, that if a man refuses to make a *contribution to Peace*, what are you to do? He may not want to attack *you*, but he must want to attack *somebody*, else why is he arming? To *defend* himself? Tell that to the marines! That's why *we* arm. That's another matter.

The *News Chronicle* is about the best paper about Hitler. It always takes a pretty strong line. Stern, but balanced, and awfully fair. It doesn't think much of his speech.

HITLER SPEECH DISAPPOINTS ALL BUT ITALY AND GERMANY

London Sees No Sign of Collaboration

That's how it heads it. 'No sign of collaboration.' This means collaboration with Russia, for with everybody else Hitler is ready and anxious to collaborate, but we won't let him. So of course we're *disappointed*.

It's getting a bit too much of a good thing. This dead-set of Hitler's against poor Russia is beyond the limit. If they *were* Bolshies once, it's beastly bad form to keep on about it forever, as he does, and keep flinging it up in

their faces. Besides, everybody knows they're not Bolshies now. To-night Low has a perfect scream of a cartoon, laughing at poor old Hitler for believing there's any Bolshevism left in the world. Weren't the Trotsky terrorists the last of the Bolshies?

But Hitler even blames Russia for this Spanish business! He insists there are Russians in Spain. He can't *prove* it. Sometimes I believe there's no such place as Spain at all!

'HITLER'S SPEECH IN BERLIN HAS DISAPPOINTED ALL THE GREAT POWERS EXCEPT HIS OWN COUNTRY AND ITALY.

'THE DELIBERATE EXCLUSION OF RUSSIA FROM THE CIRCLE OF GERMANY'S FRIENDS HAS CAUSED RESENTMENT IN FRANCE, AND M. DELBOS, FOREIGN MINISTER, COMMENTING ON THIS POLICY YESTERDAY, SAID IT WAS "DANGEROUS TO WANT TO EXCLUDE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY A PEOPLE OF NEARLY 200,000,000 WHO DESIRE PEACE".'

'The French authorities feel that the Führer has not closed the door to negotiations, but "has not opened it too wide".'

'RECALL TO "REALITIES".'

'It is held that in pointing out that Russia cannot be excluded from European collaboration, M. Delbos has "recalled Hitler to realities".'

'Whitehall regards the Führer's speech as vague, but while officials have expressed satisfaction that the "era of surprises is ended", they have failed to find any assurances that the era of collaboration has yet begun.

'Washington regrets the "apparent inability of Herr Hitler, M. Blum and Mr. Eden to speak the same lan-

guage much less find a common ground for co-operation”.’

Germany *will* not accept Russia as a ‘friend’. And we shall have to jolly well go to war with her again if she doesn’t: that’s all about it. Any fool can see that. That is the long and short of it. We cannot stand by and see one country treated by another in the way Germany does Russia—calling her a ‘Bolshie’ and all the rest of it! It’s a bit over the odds. What have the poor Communists *done* after all to be treated in this beastly way? They would never harm a fly—at least not a British fly. And they drank the King’s health in honour of Mr. Eden, didn’t they, and have called one of their tube-stations after him. They can’t do much more than that. They treat Russians a bit roughly sometimes, I’ll grant you. But what are Russians after all but savages—half Chinks and dreadfully brutal, inclined to be Bolshie into the bargain. So it’s only natural they should have to be a little severe with them, now and then. Besides, we don’t always treat our *own* people so well as all that. One must see the other fellow’s point of view. It’s a good old British maxim.

The *Evening Standard* is pretty good reading this evening. I’ve just read its leading article. Here is how it starts:

‘HITLER’S SPEECH.

‘Hitler’s speech has been badly received in London. The majority of newspapers are either disappointed or else bluntly hostile.

‘This reception is surprising. For the speech was a

peaceful one. There was no sword-rattling. Only if it be assumed that Hitler is a confirmed and consistent liar, given to shouting from the house-tops the precise opposite of what he really intends and believes, can its salient passages be interpreted as sinister.’

That’s pretty White! Or so I thought when first I read it. But now I’ve copied it out I see I didn’t quite get their meaning.

I *thought* they meant, of course, that Hitler was ‘a confirmed and consistent liar’. That he had contracted the shameful habit of bellowing out ‘from the house-tops the precise opposite of what he really intends and believes’. But I see they don’t mean that at all. Indeed, the more I read this leading article, the more I feel that old Ned might have written it. It’s a very odd article indeed.

For look here. If Hitler were *not* that, then it would be *our lot* who were the ‘confirmed and consistent liars’! You can’t have it both ways!

As to his speech being ‘a peaceful one’! Naturally I took that for bitter irony when first I read it. Who wouldn’t? For if you call it ‘peaceful’ to threaten a lot of *peace-loving* States the way Hitler is always doing (for the *Sunday Express*, I’ve got it here, said that he was threatening Britain as well, and it’s pretty plain that he was, about the German ex-colonies) but especially his blackguardly treatment of Soviet Russia—and that poor little harmless pastime of our ‘intellectuals’ the Comintern—well, if you call *that* ‘peaceful’, you must be mad. Else I am.

POSTSCRIPT

I must finish this Thought now. It was a pretty big Thought, about Hitler. I promised to post it to Ned. He wanted to see what I Thought Aloud about Hitler.

THOUGHT FIFTEEN

THE LIE AS A POLITICAL
WEAPON

(Ned sends a letter to his friend Launcelot, in which he discusses the place of *objective truth* in politics. Truth for the politician, and truth for the man of science, are two different things, he asserts. Further, *the Lie* is just as justifiable, as an up-to-date weapon, in diplomacy, as is poison gas in warfare: only *the Lie* taken to a fine art: not the homely old schoolboy untrustworthiness of a Palmerston.)

THOUGHT FIFTEEN

THE LIE AS A POLITICAL
WEAPON

THIS Thought is about Ned. It in fact *is* Ned, since it's all Ned's words. It's his letter.

In my last Thought I said I was mailing off my Thought *re* Herr Hitler to Ned and I did. I got this back by express messenger. I will copy out the whole of it for you and let you draw your own conclusions.

'You bloody crackpot!' That is how Ned begins. 'You are past hope and beyond cure. The poison has eaten too deeply into your system. Still, in my capacity of good physician, I will not say die. (The worst of it is, too, I shall have to die with you. Adversity brings one damn funny bedfellows!)

'It is, I am aware, beyond any human power to make you see it. But you are literally wallowing in a bog of the most unblushing opposite-of-the-simple-Truth. So much is this the case, that you now *by instinct* describe any piece of straightforward common sense as a "lie": whereas anything that is ugly enough and silly enough, you hail as a piece of statesmanlike veracity.

'You know that paper I told you to order from your newsagent, the *Manchester Guardian*? That is a valuable document. It is always wrong. But so *conscientiously* and full-bloodedly so, that it can be implicitly relied upon to

supply you with the opposite opinion to what you, as an intelligent being, should hold.

‘Turn to your copy of January 26th, 1937, if you have it. There you will find a cablegram from Trotsky. Please take note of the following passage:

‘“Stalin has invented nothing new. He is merely repeating several previous cases in an exaggerated form. . . .

‘“It is alleged, for instance, that in 1935 I (Trotsky) wrote, through Vladimir Romm, of whom I have never heard, to Radek, with whom I have had no relations since 1928, telling him that it was necessary to restore the capitalist system in the Soviet Union. But this is exactly what is now being done by the new ‘aristocracy’ of which Stalin is the head. Stalin, therefore, is merely trying to attribute to me through the person of Radek the very policy which I publicly accuse him of putting into practice.”’

‘When thieves fall out, my dear Launcelot! Or in this case, when liars do so!

‘“The Lie”—the opposite of what is objectively true (*merely* objectively true, they would say)—is a recognized weapon of Soviet technique. And often the stupider the lie, the more readily it is believed—by stupid people!

‘This particular technique, as exposed by Bronstein: namely that of attributing invariably to other people what you are about to do, or have just done, yourself. It is of the A.B.C. of Soviet diplomacy. And unfortunately the statesmen and journalists of other nations, besides the Soviet, have recently employed it to good purpose. More especially of those nations working hand in glove with that country of indefatigable prevaricators. The French are getting almost as good at it as the Rus-

sian Marxists. The whole of the Non-Intervention racket is a beautiful example of it. They are past-masters.

‘For it is common knowledge that the war in Spain has long ceased to be a civil war. It is a French colonial war in reality. There have been more French troops engaged against Mola and Franco than against Abd El Krim.

‘Here are the salient facts. Russia has supplied an enormous amount of war material, and a corps of aviators. These aviators, whether in the west, in Asturias, or on the other fronts, keep themselves to themselves. They are not encouraged by the Russian High Command to mix with the Spaniards. But they have been the backbone of the air arm of the “Legitimate Government” of Moses Rosenberg. There has been practically no Russian Infantry though. France has supplied that. And brigaded with the French, have been a miscellaneous collection of other nationals—Czechoslovakian, Belgian, British.

‘Franco’s troops could make no headway against these forces. Once he reached Madrid he was held in check by this foreign army, most formidably entrenched. Then about Christmastime, those great countries, as well disposed to Franco as we are ill-disposed, began sending heavy contingents to the nationalists.

‘Immediately Great Britain stepped in. She began asking everybody to refrain from “intervening” in this disgraceful way. She reminded all and sundry (but especially Germany of course) of their solemn engagements, as members of the Non-Intervention Committee.

‘Is not this absurd? Is it not so blatantly insincere as to remind all those aware of it of the diplomacy of an Asiatic State, rather than of an Anglo-Saxon nation? Yet our statesmen are very decent people, who, in ordinary circumstances, would be highly trustworthy,

as men go; with those standards of veracity we are accustomed to expect, even of diplomats, in Europe.

'If the Trotsky (or the Stalin) technique has been employed, it has only been employed because if you go in with rather crooked people, your own words and deeds, without of course becoming crooked, grow—well, *peculiar*. You cannot act with, and for, a criminal, without some degree of accommodation to the criminal view of life: which is why the great criminal lawyer is never quite like other men.

'But as a matter of fact "criminal" is too ill-defined a word to use. A soldier is a "murderer" if you like to look at it that way. We cannot say criminal. Not to-day.

'It will be better, as a matter of fact, to drop such words of ethical connotation, altogether. "Crooked" is not the *mot juste* in such a case. We have passed beyond those moralities. We have got into a more rarefied—into an Einsteinian—atmosphere. And we are, none of us, George Washingtons; so why, after all, should we deal in such expressions as "lie"? Let us discard that word at once. Do not let *us*, too, be hypocrites.

'We have, headed by our Government, all unconsciously passed over into a region where there literally is no Truth. Truth is, as it were, irrelevant. We have entered a world of Jesuit values—or what people believed to be Jesuit values—where "for the greater glory of God" all things were permitted. *The end justifies the means* is our motto now.

'Besides, we are assuming, are we not—we have for a long time now assumed—that Mr. Hitler, whom we have cast for the role of our enemy and Bugaboo No. 1—is "a confirmed and consistent liar". Therefore we are in a sense merely adapting ourselves to what we insist is

his peculiarity. And since, wherever it may be, our policy returns to, and turns about, Herr Hitler, as about a magnetic centre, it is perhaps natural that we should have developed a rather *subjective* way of expressing ourselves. That is inevitable.

'Now this *subjectivity*—which is so characteristic of every manifestation of Soviet life that people have frequently insisted that "drugs" were at the bottom of it—has its dangers. You for instance, my dear Launcelot, no longer know if you are standing on your head or your heels. Everything has become a phantasmagoria for you. The objective world has vanished from before your eyes. In its place is a sort of dope-dream, or symbolic universe, where *your* values take the place of the values of mere objective truth.

'By the way, I hope I have not frightened you by these words "subjective" and "objective"? You need not be frightened. All "subjective" means is what your ego *wishes*, and dreams that it has, rather than what *is*. "Objective" is the opposite of that. It is what is common to all men—seen, smelt, touched by all men. This brief explanation will have served its purpose, I hope, and help you to see what is meant.

'The powers arrayed *against* you—against you and your French and Russian allies—are tremendously *objective* in their outlook. That is where they have the advantage over you. They are the "realists", as it is called. They see a strictly concrete and objective world, where you see a subjective and so an unreal one.

'Your dream-world, your world of lies, as the moralist would call it, has its advantages, too. It is possible to wish things true. To "build Nineveh with your sighing." It is the world of the Oriental into which you have passed

out of the Western World: and so you have become a fire-eater, and may yet be an unsuccessful sword-swallower.

'But the Orient is not *politically*, at this moment, a very encouraging spectacle. The world of hard facts is still probably the sounder of the two, politically. The Western objectivity is the better bet.

'You and your friends are like a lot of Einsteins, or Berkeleyans, if you like. For you, the tables and chairs and the walls of your dwellings are sliding and slipping away; disappearing into the ground, or forever moving about. Whereas for the opposite camp they are *fest*—objectively realized, euclidianly understood. They have one steadfast character. They have personality. They occupy space. They stand still.

'If Dr. Johnson were there he would give these chairs and tables of yours a hearty kick—and you too I expect. "Thus I refute you!" You know the story? When he got angry with some Berkeleyan.

'The brilliant, the subjective, imagination of the Jew (who, as the leader of the Liberal world, has been playing an important part in all these transactions) and of the Slav, his partner, is, I believe, upon the *practical* plane, no match for the four-square objective "realism" of the Italian and the Teuton. You should really beware! I do think you should heed my warning. You have got into a dope-dream order of things. You are making enemies of people who, in the popular parlance, have "their heads screwed on" fairly straight. Whereas your friends are imaginative, excitable—great agitators, yes, but probably less good soldiers (I mean on the big scale).

'I believe, Launcelot, you have chosen the wrong side. All your geese are swans to an alarming degree

just now—made so by Einsteinian magic. And again you are setting out to hunt down a great military nation and its friends, who, at the worst, will fight like cornered rats. What a gamble, Launcelot! What a perhaps foolish gamble! For even if you *win*, you lose. Indeed, it will be *worse* for you afterwards if you do win.'

This lucubration of Ned's frankly bewilders me. It is being borne in upon me more and more that poor Ned is just going Bolshie. There is no other word for it I am afraid.

THOUGHT SIXTEEN

MONOPOLY AND
ANTI-MONOPOLY

(Launcelot agrees to take down from Ned's dictation some Thinking Aloud of Ned's. So Ned sits down and begins to Think Aloud. Why, he asks, does so-called 'Democracy' bristle at the mere mention of Fascism, but coo and lisp whenever it refers to Communism? Because both Russian Communism and Financial Democracy are in their essence *internationalist*, whereas Fascism is *nationalist*. The former stands for an abstract super-state—the latter stands for a concrete 'sovereign state'. Ned suggests that we should substitute for such misleading terms as 'communism', 'democracy', and 'fascism' something else. The two terms Monopoly and Anti-Monopoly summarize accurately the antagonistic interests involved.)

THOUGHT SIXTEEN

MONOPOLY AND
ANTI-MONOPOLY

THE other morning Ned walked into my study as I was Thinking Aloud. I looked up but went on Thinking. He watched me with a broad grin as usual, but of course I don't mind.

I was seated by an open window in my dressing-gown, it was the spring. A shower of rain every twenty minutes, and then a spate of pale sunshafts before the next shower, which promised a fine summer. My words were passing out of the window in a regular torrent—I felt like a lark which at Heaven's gate sings.

'Now that Azaña's out of a lunatic asylum,' was what I was actually saying, 'and the Legitimate Government of Spain has gone democratic, and put Caballero in a strait-jacket, I can't for the life of me see what further excuse Franco has for murdering the International Brigade with his Moors.'

My pen was tearing over the paper as I talked, to catch up my Thoughts and I had just written 'Moors'.

'What was that you were saying about Franco?' asked Ned, wagging his forefinger at me.

'Oh nothing much Ned,' said I, 'nothing much old man.'

'You've been reading the morning paper again!'

He could see *The Times* open on the table and half a dozen other papers.

'I thought it was jolly shabby of him,' I stammered, a little red in the face, 'to go on killing all Winston's nephews, in view of the fact—'

'What fact?' he cut in, a little unpleasantly. 'Facts are not your strong point, are they?'

'I was not aware . . .' I said, closing my notebook, to show him I was not going to let him see what I'd been thinking.

'Open that book again Launce,' he issued his commands, standing over me like a horrid Hitler, with his finger pointing. 'I'm going to do a bit of Thinking Aloud for a change. You're going to take it down. See?'

'From your dictation?'

'Exactly. From my dictation.'

'Oh, very well,' I said, 'if you're too lazy to do it yourself.'

'I'm sick of your travestying my thoughts Launce,' he told me. 'I might as well do it myself and get it put down properly.'

'Ay ay sir!' said I.

'Instead,' said he, 'of your putting down all that you can remember, and then filling up with a lot of nonsense of your own.'

'I have no pretensions to being brainy,' I said, 'or anything like that.'

'Not really!'

'No, I shouldn't be Thinking Aloud should I if I knew my own mind.'

'It's as well you don't!' he said, a little unnecessarily, I thought. 'Well, are you ready?'

'Perfectly,' I replied, a little stiff and formal. 'I am at your service.'

He sat down opposite me and very slowly began Thinking Aloud. And this is what I took down. I have it verbatim.

NED THINKING ALOUD

I propose to have a spring-cleaning. A final dust-up. All our minds are shamelessly untidy. It is time we put the Hoover on to them and got things a little trim. For the time is approaching when a bomb will drop upon all this muddle. If one wall of our flat was sliced off, what a disgrace to have such utter disorder exposed to the public gaze!

This is an issue of life and death. You understand, Launcelot? Our apathy is staggering. *We* are like those 'sommambulic cattle' of Thomas Carlyle's. I propose to make this issue as clear as crystal. More I cannot do. After that I will leave it to you. It will be up to you after that.

In all the speeches of British politicians this great issue of life and death is misrepresented. Not of course wilfully.

This issue is represented as a collision between rival ideologies. 'Fascism' is on the one side, it is said, and Communism-cum-Democracy is on the other.

Generally the British Statesman will assert that *he* stands outside this conflict. But his actions belie this assertion. What he calls 'democracy' has no hesitation in choosing between Fascism and Communism. It plumps for the latter. It bristles at the mere mention of the former.

But why does what is miscalled Democracy loathe Fascism with such a truly Biblical intolerance? Because Fascism means business. It really means to get rid of the

incubus, which is crushing us all down into the gutter.

What they call 'Democracy' is in fact a 'Banker's Olympus'. It is operating under the instructions of 'Loan-capital', more than anything else. Fascism is a revolt of the People. A revolt against debt. I am no Fascist. But I love Freedom. Also I hate Usury.

If Fascism triumphed the credit-web that has spread itself over the earth would be broken, and the big abstract money-spinner at its centre killed.

Concrete values would be put in the place of *abstract* values. In those two words, *concrete* and *abstract*, you have the whole bag of tricks. That is why all the miscalled 'Democracies' spit fire when they see the shadow of the Spanish Phalanx creeping nearer to Malaga, or the Swastika worming its way into Finland. Its vast web of loan-slavery is threatened *only* by that. Communism does not threaten it. On the contrary it helps its brother spider.

The issue is misrepresented by all the Democratic Statesmen, because in the first place all the terms they employ cover realities very different from what these terms suggest.

'Fascism', 'Communism', and 'Democracy', are merely names, and very confusing ones at that. Marxian Communism as practised in Russia is not Communism: not as that would have been understood by the theorists of Communism before the Russian Revolution. 'Democracy' in England is highly undemocratic, and 'Fascism' takes a variety of forms, and is seldom what it is supposed to be by its friends, or by its enemies. It is really the nearest thing to Democracy. It is a highly disciplined Democracy, framed for a time of emergency.

The alignment is all right. That is real enough. 'Fascism' versus 'Communo-Democracy' (granted the validity of these terms) is how the battle is to be fought.

We (Great Britain) are sure enough on the side of Communism. And we are out to destroy 'Fascism', ultimately by force. It is only *Zero Hour* that is in doubt. That may be in the next five months, as Lord Milne says: or it may be as many years before we do it. I incline to the shorter interval.

But there the correctness of this statement ends. For since 'Communism' is not Communism: since 'Democracy' never (as mouthed to-day) means Democracy, and since 'Fascism' is just a picturesque tag, indicating the emblems of power of a Roman tribune, and since this historic symbolism in itself tells us very little about what is understood by 'Fascism', we have obviously to look for some other meaning to this enormous fight-to-the-death that is in preparation.

What is it that has driven a peaceable old man like Mr. Baldwin, in his last years, into this gladiatorial mood? What is the motive power, of course unavowed, behind all this dialectical sound and fury? Even a political two-year-old would hardly take seriously the assertion that it is all about 'Democracy'. Or all about Herr Hitler's unfriendly treatment of Communists.

For, after all, as to the latter point: the Communists are particularly violent sectaries, who make no secret of the fact that they would disembowel everybody not a Communist if they got the chance. And so they can hardly be treated by 'kid-glove' methods, to use Mr. Stalin's phrase.

No, we must put out of our mind all these words, all the transparently insincere bombast by which public

feeling is worked up, to the war-pitch. To the sticking-point. What is underneath it all?

I will tell you, or I think I can. The two forces at present confronted in this cockpit of a world are, on the one side, Monopoly: on the other Anti-Monopoly. This is the best simplification. It discloses the central opposition.

You could substitute for *Monopoly versus Anti-Monopoly* this other pair: *Indivisible Economy versus Individual Economy*.

If you are not familiar with politics at all: if you have not followed all the tortuous phraseology of Geneva, of Litvinov, of Baldwin, of Blum, this simplification may be of no use at all. It may be so much Greek to you. So let me explain.

Having said, 'let me explain', old Ned got up, sighed, drew a *Régie* cigarette out of his sumptuous case, lighted it, and gazed at me in silence.

'Are you through, Ned?' I asked, getting up too.

'No. But we better call this a Thought. What I have to explain will take some time. Let us go and have lunch and I will "explain" afterwards.'

So when Ned 'explains' it will be another Thought. This one will end here.

THOUGHT SEVENTEEN

THE DREAM OF A FARMER,
AND THE DREAM OF A
MONEYLENDER, RESPECTIVELY

(Ned and Launcelot lunch by the side of a swimming-pool, at one of Ned's clubs, and Launcelot nearly gets thrown into the pool by his impatient friend. Upon their return, Ned continues to Think Aloud. He pursues his argument. 'To-day,' he says, 'political life is a reflection of commercial life.' And political monopoly functions in the same way as commercial monopoly, of which it is merely the representative upon the political plane.—We are assisting at a life and death encounter between political Monism and political Pluralism.—Ned analyses 'the American Dream'. The dream of a born Pluralist. He shows how the Great Slump cured the American of his fatalistic acquiescence in what could be described as 'the Financier's Dream'.)

THE DREAMS OF A FARMER AND OF A
MONEYLENDER, RESPECTIVELY

Our lunch passed off very well, if a little rough in places. We went to the Salisbury, a newfangled club of Ned's (cock and hen) and had snacks upon a balcony, which overlooked a swimming pool. This was too damned handy, this swimming pool, and several times Ned threatened to throw me in. I really thought he would once; he nearly did it. He asked me if I would like a little Liberty Cabbage with my roll-mops. I said what was that, *Liberty Cabbage*. Oh, he said, it was what the Yank's used to call Sauerkraut, when they didn't want to say Sauerkraut after America came into the war.

'“Liberty” is good,' I retorted, for a German dish! I should have thought “Frogmarch Kraut” would have been a better name.'

He was up like a flash and had come round and seized me by the seat of the trousers. Before I knew where I was I was half over the balcony railings, gazing down into the green waters of the bath, which were quite rough with sizeable splashy waves. I had my eye fixed on a rope, which dangled a few feet away, over the water. It was for the bathers to swarm up and swing on. As I fell I thought I might be able to catch hold of it, as I am a dud diver, and I should have got a nasty smack from the bath as I hit it. But he left me lying half over, with my legs back on the safe side, beside the lunch table.

I screwed my head round, and looked at Ned.

'On the hedge! As usual,' he jeered. 'Come and eat your lunch. I don't want to see you drowned just yet.'

I was considerably relieved that he hadn't tossed me in, for it looked infernally deep and it might have been pretty serious if I'd fallen in.

When we were back again in my study, I took up my pen, and he went on where he had left off. He spoke slowly. If he saw I was lagging behind he waited for me to catch up. This is how he went on, from where he said: 'Let me explain.'

NED THINKING ALOUD

'To-day our political life is a reflection of our economic life. It should not be; but it is.

'Political Monopoly functions in the same way as Commercial Monopoly. Often it is the same thing. Great concentrations of capital, and great concentrations of power, are largely one and the same thing. And the League of Nations—or Mr. Roosevelt's policy of Centralization—is conceived on exactly the same principles as the Lyons teashop Monopoly.

'In order to understand politics you must forget politics. Forget such shopsoiled abstractions for the moment as "freedom", "democracy", "communism", "fascism". That is picturesque verbiage, merely. It means nothing. Such tags are so many picturesque appeals to ignorant emotionalism. The emotionalism appealed to is generally the religious emotionality remaining in us all as an idle residuum. This can be tapped by any stump-orator.

'What is underneath this empty phraseology is two

things, locked at present in mortal combat. Let us call them A and B. And—to employ the language of religious controversy—A stands for *The One*, whereas B stands for *The Many*.

'A resolves itself into what we may describe as Political Monism. (The League of Nations and Communism are examples of that.) B resolves itself into what may be described as Political Plurality. (Any nationalist movement is an example of that.)

'Observe the United States of America. It is the best illustration of what I am talking about. What is happening there should be an invaluable object lesson for the European. For he can observe the same stark forces at work, but in far less complex forms, since the States of the Union do not speak different tongues but one tongue, English; and they are not divided from each other culturally, by different historic backgrounds.

'The great statesmen who drew up the American Constitution were *pluralists*. President Roosevelt is the opposite. He is an outstanding *monist*. He wishes to concentrate political power at Washington, the capital city and the seat of government; just as the League of Nations wishes to establish sovereignty over Europe at Geneva.

'Were the League of Nations successful in establishing sovereignty at Geneva, that would convert the present plurality of "sovereign states" into a United States of Europe. If it were to be efficient, the League of Nations would liquidate *in toto* the "national sovereignty" of the various states of which Europe is composed.

'This is the dream of the Internationalist. And its consummation would be followed by the establishment of a United States of the World. For Geneva, Moscow, and Washington in the hands of the respective "centralizers"

(of Litvinov, Roosevelt, and Eden type) would act in perfect harmony. And very rapidly, we must suppose, from common action they would proceed to common sovereignty.

'*The Times* produced a leading article a short while ago, which was headed "The American Dream". It was about the problems with which President Roosevelt is wrestling, and about the old dream of the earlier Americans which continually returns to obstruct his monopolistic path.

"The American Dream," as it is called, is essentially a farmer's dream. It is diametrically opposed to the Internationalist Dream—which, ultimately, is the dream of a moneylender. And the former is the dream of a born pluralist, whereas the latter is the dream of a pure monist.

'Let me quote, however, a few lines from *The Times*' leading article.

"*The American Dream* has always been that of a nation consisting as largely as possible of free citizens each owning and running his own farm or his own business, independent both economically and politically, able and ready to stand up for his own rights and his own views against any pressure from others. This was Lincoln's ideal, as it was Jefferson's. It is however an ideal which during the past quarter of a century has been rapidly losing any correspondence with reality. . . . Even before the war there had been great amalgamations in the oil, steel, and packing industries; but the movement reached its most startling development in the early twenties. An impelling motive in most cases was the expectation of savings to be made by mass production, unified control, and the elimination of competition; but . . . all . . . com-

bined to hasten . . . the gathering together of hitherto independent businesses into consolidated corporations and other controlling organizations. . . . The tendency for many years has been to eliminate the independent citizen, owning and running his own business, in favour of vast organizations, the ultimate control of which, through an intricate network of holding companies and subsidiaries, is vested in financial groups in New York.

"Americans have been uncertain how they should regard this movement away from the traditional American ideal of individual enterprise and open competition. Some have applauded it as making for economy and efficiency . . . though not perhaps with quite the same confidence now as before the depression."

'Such, in outline, is "The American Dream". It is a farmer's dream, or a small-town dream. But the "great big city" has its dream, too: a dream of "unified control", of "the gathering together of hitherto independent businesses into consolidated corporations". And at the heart of the "great big city" is of course always the banker, who is in fact a gigantic moneylender. And so the city-dream always ends by being a *moneylender's dream*.

'Now the American, during the last quarter of a century, like the European, succumbed to the dream of the moneylender; either fatalistically, considering that "society had grown so complex" that there was nothing to be done against it, or else arguing that in effect these "vast organizations . . . the ultimate control of which . . . was vested in financial groups in New York" did make "for economy and efficiency".'

'But the Depression changed all that. It has shaken the "moneylender's dream" as much as formerly a bogus prosperity shook the dream of the farmer and small

trader. It no longer seemed so certain that these vast concentrations of capital and this mass-organization was any more "efficient" or "economical" than the small scale system of "the American Dream".

'It may not be amiss to supplement this popular statement by a concrete fact or two, no more, with the object of demonstrating how the loan-capitalist of Herr Feder, or in other words the large-scale moneylender, controls from his city office, by means of his control over the credit-machinery, the lives and labour of 99.9 per cent of mankind.

'A very able Jewish banker, of the name of Paul Warburg, was responsible for the establishment of a thing called the Federal Reserve Board. Typically, this institution came into being in order to *curb* the power of the banker; but in fact of course it achieved the reverse of what it pretended to have in mind. The Federal Reserve Board is the apotheosis of the bankers' power, and is to-day the most powerful single institution in the world. The central reserve executive is able to run the market up or down at will, and overnight to break or make anybody and everybody in the chaos of some great "slump". The gentle art of "buying cheap and selling dear" has never known such a fabulously perfect instrument.

'President Wilson (he of the Versailles Treaty, whose blessings we in Europe are all of us enduring at this moment) set up a Commission. This Commission was to discover if there was such a thing as a Money Trust knocking about anywhere in the U.S.A. It solemnly discovered that there *was*. And the following bit of information, which I thought I might supply at this point, is taken from the findings of that Commission.

'It was reported, to that owlish predecessor and worthy forerunner of Mr. Roosevelt, that in fact five New York banking houses controlled as many as 112 other banks and financial and industrial companies, with capital resources amounting to £4,449,000,000. Here are the classes of concern, and the respective capitals involved:

	dollars
34 banks and trust companies ..	2,679,000,000
10 insurance companies ..	2,293,000,000
32 transport companies (rail, steamship, and express companies) ..	11,784,000,000
24 producing and trading companies	3,339,000,000
12 public utility companies (power, light, telegraph) ..	2,150,000,000
Total ..	22,245,000,000

'I do not like figures and statistics myself and I do not suppose you do. But one must make use of them sometimes. And I think that the above table pretty well speaks for itself. It shows how by the control of Credit a small group of persons can get a stranglehold upon any community. Their power is far greater, and more insidiously exercised, than that of any political despot whatever.

'That such possibilities of despotism must be eliminated by *some* action on our part is obvious. But what action? The Communist says by putting in the place of this tremendous racket that other racket centred in Moscow—that Trust of Trusts, *Soviet Limited*. But what is the difference between a power-trust and a money-trust (since ultimately power=money)? That would merely be to furnish the Economist with a Pretorian Guard, and to arm him with thumb-screws and machine-guns.

'To revert to our *Times* article and to "The American

Dream". There you saw it asserted that *before* the great depression the American felt that, little as he liked it, the abstract habits of mass-life, controlled by the Lords of Credit, was after all more *efficient* and *economical* than small-scale activity. In the "modern world" the *pluralist* could have no part. We must resign ourselves to abandoning all initiative, or "individualism". But the depression taught him better. It brought home to him that this money-system was in fact just as *antiquated*—just as ramshackle, just as apt to let you down with a bump, and for all its up-to-date gadgets just as creaking and rusty—as that of the "dream" he had abandoned.

'Why even the old State banking system was as good as *this*. Its collapses and "depressions" were at least only local in their effect. Its more glaring dishonesties were more easy to put your finger on. With luck you could get your fingers on the throat of the ruffian who had fooled you, with his little "wildcat" lending-shop!

'A century ago the chartering of banks was an affair like the licensing of a casino. The granting of a charter to run a bank was a reward for political services, bestowed upon a party leader, as often as not as corrupt as a French politician. The state subscribed for part of the stock, and shared in the management. Bank statements or the filing of accounts were unknown. As these banks were privileged to issue notes, banking was a grand game, and the public took many a nasty fall.

'Since thousands of banks were issuing notes, some of them of very inferior workmanship, counterfeit notes abounded. There is a story of Horace Greeley lecturing in the Middle West in those bad old days, and receiving payment for his lecture in dollar bills of a score of different varieties, some of them very slapdash forgeries indeed.

He handed them back, with the civil request that he might be given "more plausibly executed counterfeits, else he would not be able to dispose of them when he returned home".

'This bad old system had to end. For "no failure causes so much injury to the general public as that of a bank . . . they are the centres of financial operations in the communities in which they are located. The failure of a single one of them creates widespread havoc and loss, not only to depositors, but to all business interests". So, it was argued, the small bank must go, and the central bank take its place. And the Federal Reserve Board was the ultimate expression of this drive for greater stability, trustworthiness and efficiency.

'Alas! the great Depression, which has utterly ruined untold numbers of Americans, has shown that this was only another illusion. Better perhaps the ill-made counterfeit notes, or the "wild-cat" bills which could never be redeemed, than this more sleek and slick, beautifully-appointed, semi-official, "Federal" roguery upon the grand scale. For no American doubts any longer that these "depressions" and "slumps" are artificial and deliberately engineered. And he almost would vote back, if he could, the laughably corrupt small-town lending-shop, where his grandfathers were robbed, yes, but at least they knew who was robbing them, and could put a bullet in them, at a pinch. But better still to vote in a new system altogether, and crush this insane legalized usury once, and for all.'

Ned got up and waved to me to finish.

'Let us have some tea,' he said. 'I can't wind this up without a crumpet or two. Do you mind?'

I was not sorry myself to have a cup of tea. I like my cup of tea. And if the truth were known I find anything to do with High Finance particularly distressing, and as to Yankeeland, that fills me at once the moment it's mentioned with *the* most awful depression. All Ned's stuff about the Federal Reserve Board (whatever that may be) got me down properly. I hated writing the silly words over and over again. It's all very well for Jews, they have a head for that sort of thing. But as to me, I'm damned if I know the difference between a 'bull' and a 'bear'. Shouldn't know one if I met one! If I was in a 'bear-market' I should think I was in a bullring. Which, seeing my ancestors were bankers, is somewhat odd. I suppose the early Nidwits got lending money to friends out of sheer goodness of heart and slipped into the banking business before they knew where they were. It *must* have happened that way. Besides, issuing banknotes must have been good fun, as they did in those days. Rather like forging. As a matter of fact I *am* a Nidwit after all—I had never thought of it that way, but one of my only real accomplishments is *forging*. I forge signatures so you wouldn't tell the difference. I can do the most topping forgeries. Once I wrote a whole letter as a practical joke, to a fellow in another fellow's handwriting. He wrote a long, and, I believe, rather abusive letter back—to the other fellow I mean. He thought it came from him. I wrote one or two rather snooty things—I had great fun over it. He never forgave the other fellow, as a matter of fact, although he assured him he'd never written it. I've had many a quiet chortle over that. But I suppose if I weren't a Nidwit I shouldn't be able to do that sort of thing.

THE ONE AND 'INDIVISIBLE', VERSUS THE MANY

(Ned and Launcelot have tea and crumpets. The former quotes Ellen Wilkinson. Then, in the role of Philo Vance, he negligently takes up his tale again.—In both Europe and America these two great principles—that of *The One* and that of *The Many*—are locked in mortal combat. Messrs. Roosevelt, Baldwin, Blum, and Stalin stand for *The One*. For the 'Indivisible'. The Nationalists, wherever found, stand for *The Many*.—Ned quotes Disraeli against Mr. Baldwin. But, he says, world-diversity is not necessarily a conservative principle; though every true conservative must be against world-uniformity: 'opposing everything like centralized government,' in the words of Disraeli.)

THOUGHT EIGHTEEN

THE ONE AND 'INDIVISIBLE',
VERSUS THE MANY

NED walked into the crumpets. I had some Tiptree (small scarlets) and we made perfect pigs of ourselves. While he ate great doughy wads, plastered with Essex strawberries no bigger than pimples, he chattered on about the American Constitution and American Banking. He explained how the Big Business feud against the Supreme Court began with the decision given against the Standard Oil and Tobacco Trust in 1909, declaring them illegal, just as these same Judges of the Supreme Court have declared the New Deal illegal; and he insisted that Roosevelt, just as much as Wilson, is the camouflaged nominee of the Trusts, and how he is getting back at the 'six old men', and revenging Standard Oil and 'American Tobacco'. As to the Supreme Court, it is a wonderful device, said Ned: and he repeated to me with great enthusiasm what Wellington had said to Bunsen—that by this institution the United States atoned for all the other shortcomings of its government. But the Duke of Wellington I well knew my Leader would never have any truck with, and I sniffed as he quoted him.

But when he saw I just hated such names as Alexander Hamilton or Jefferson which were hurtling about—and when it came to 'The Suffolk Banking System', and its first Clearing House at Boston, I just banged down my

crumpet and made a face as if I'd got a raging toothache—he stopped. He was merciful—he is sometimes. He began telling me stories about Red Indians instead. I stalked with Red Medicine Men upon the upper reaches of the Hudson, years before a Cabot started talking to God (but *so* privately as to exclude all other men born of women). I even forgave Ned the *Silver Purchase Act* of 1890—to which he slyly referred, as, with our braves, we approached what is now Manhattan.

Manhattan! How right Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., was when she wrote the following words of wisdom, *re* that objectionable site of the premier city of America.

'Speaking not tactfully but honestly, I wonder if it would really make much difference to America if Manhattan Island got loose from its moorings and floated into the middle of the Atlantic. The predominantly Nordic Stalinists could continue happily their civil war with the mainly Jewish Trotskyists. The immense skyscrapers would throw to heaven the challenge of their superb uselessness. The cliques at the Town Hall Club would still be so busy lecture-tasting that they wouldn't notice being as physically cut off from the rest of America as they are now spiritually.'

When Ned had partaken of three cups of black tea (he insisted upon this black brew) he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, selected a *Régie* cigarette from their princely receptacle, and drawled out, as he sank back into the roomy depths of my most hospitable chair:

'Well, Launce, are we goin' to do a bit more Thinkin' Aloud, or are you wiltin' under the effects of your *bourgeois* Five O'clock?'¹

¹ This is really insufferable. I had no idea where Launcelot was going for his literary inspiration or I should have insisted upon his handing over his American Detective literature on the spot. (Ed.)

I opened my notebook, took up my pen, and Ned continued his rigmarole as follows:

NED THINKING ALOUD

'I think I need not apologize if I dwell upon the greatest of the Western Democracies, at a time when Democratic institutions are so much on everybody's lips.

'It was no less a person than Edmund Burke who wrote in these terms of the Western Hemisphere:

'"Nothing less than a convulsion . . . can ever restore the European nations to that liberty by which they were once so much distinguished. The Western world was the seat of freedom until another, more Western, was discovered; and that other will probably be its asylum when it is hunted down in every other part."

'It is long since those words were written. But in spite of everything, the Americans still have a shot or two in their locker, in the matter of liberty; on account of this recurrent 'dream' of theirs, and because of their relative isolation.

'*The Times* did supply a useful statement, in its "American Dream" leader, of the fundamental opposition existing in the United States between those who, like Mr. Roosevelt, fatalistically accept the mechanical dictates of the Machine Age (as did Karl Marx) and those who, like Senator Borah (or like Hitler) do not.

'Mr. Roosevelt would argue that he bowed to the inevitable (optimist and fatalist at once). That would signify acceptance of the monopolistic principle, of centralized control. Mr. Borah would, on the other hand, insist that the "American Dream" must not be repudiated, in favour of that of an abstract, depersonalized, community, upon an insect model.

'What would amount to a sort of Inca Empire, but reinforced with all the power-plant of which the Machine Age man disposes, is what Borah would predict: a society out of which the last vestiges of freedom, upon the Whig pattern, and as that would have been understood by Franklin or Jefferson, had been crushed. This slick uniformity of centrally "planned" existence, where the animal life has been subdued to a metallic pattern—that is America, you might say if you were there. Yet, possibly for that very reason, in the homeland of the slick and the New the bitterest struggle is likely to be waged against the stereotyping of life.

'That political battle, however, in which the United States of America is at present engaged, with such a savage desperation, is the same battle that is being fought out in Europe—the battle to join in which Great Britain has just started to arm to the teeth, upon the side of political monism. Only here it is more complex.

'Those of the anti-Trust persuasion over here we call "nationalists" (or, less exactly, "fascists"), since the "states" here are also nations. The other side we call "democrats" or "communists"; but the one accurate generic term that should serve for both is "internationalists". It would be better to drop altogether the three terms "communist", "fascist", and "democrat", as I have already implied: for where they are not plain humbug, they are always, as definitions, unsatisfactory.

'When Mr. Bernard Shaw says Mr. Roosevelt is a communist, but does not know it, he means that he is an internationalist, masquerading (innocently) as a patriot.

'Hitler is, if you like, the Huey Long of Europe. I make use of this comparison merely to lay bare the principle

involved, not to suggest that Herr Hitler resembles the late American protagonist of state-sovereignty.

'Now for my part I am on the side of the pluralists. I am a "nationalist" because I am a pluralist, rather than a pluralist because I am a "nationalist". I do not admire that fatalism which accepts the conditions imposed upon men by the technique of industry (their invention). I am upon the side of "The American Dream"—or "The English Dream", or "The German Dream"—as against the dream of the Internationalist. Everything of value in life, as I see it, would be destroyed in the process, were a stereotyped control of human life to be enforced.

'You may be on the other side, you probably are—and I may be wrong and you may be right. My dream may prevail, or yours may do so. But at least my views are held without affectation. I am, as we say, sincere. And they do not proceed from any mercenary or worldly calculation. Indeed, my personal interests would unquestionably direct me to throw in my lot with the Internationalists. They are the richer and, materially, the more powerful faction. That would be the orthodox, the superficially "intelligent", the most profitable thing to do.

'I am not a conservative. Yet if I were (like our Leader Mr. Baldwin) a conservative I should find it difficult to justify a policy of support for the International idea, or for political Monopoly. For Mr. Baldwin's political god, Benjamin Disraeli, described with an exemplary clarity what the attitude of the conservative should be towards precisely this question of centralized power versus decentralized power.

'"The Tory party will yet rue the day that they consented to the Poor Law Bill, for they acted contrary to

principle—the principle of opposing everything like centralized government, and favouring in every way the distribution of power.”

‘There was “a mysterious stranger” giving the English ruling class a very sound piece of advice indeed, and incidentally enunciating a principle which holds as much to-day as it did then.

‘But it is not a matter of conservatism or of radicalism, in England at all events. You can be either conservatively-minded, or radically-minded, it makes no difference, and with equal fervour object to world-uniformity, and cast your vote for world-diversity.’

Ned sprang up out of his chair like a Jack-in-the-box, and came over to me smiling primly. I finished writing ‘world-diversity’ and put down my pen. Ned looked over my shoulder at what I had just been doing.

‘You can gallop with your pen with the best, Launce!’ he complimented me. ‘Good man!’

‘My speed’s pretty good,’ I said. ‘That’s my training as a Loud Thinker.’

‘Yes. The rate at which you think, Launce, must take a bit of keeping up with.’

He was pulling my leg I expect, as he often suggests I don’t think as quickly as I should. I lay back and worked my fingers up and down. They were quite stiff from their gallop with the pen.

‘How about a spot of tiffin, Ned?’ I said. ‘Have you any more to say?’

Ned nodded.

‘I’m afraid so,’ he said. ‘I’ve been a bit highbrow in

my stuff about Monopolies. I have to bring all this home to the Housewife more. The British housewife.’

‘I suppose you have,’ I said.

‘The housewife has to be made to understand “Collective Security” and “Indivisible Peace”; on the analogy of Chain Stores and small retail shops.’

‘I suppose she has,’ I said.

‘The hand that rocks the cradle!’ he scoffed, rocking an imaginary bambino. ‘We have to show her how Mr. Baldwin stands for Lyons and Salmon and Gluckstein, and Herr Hitler for the Teashop where all’s “homemade” and for the small tobacconist. The League of Nations is the Woolworth principle in politics. See what I mean?’

‘I’m not a housewife,’ I reminded him, with dignity.

‘No. But I’d like to send you out with a stringbag to the Portobello Road all the same, and see what you brought back!’

‘I dare say I should acquit myself as well as you, in my encounters with the tradespeople,’ I retorted stiffly.

Old Ned laughed. He’d dressed me up, in his mind, as an old housewife, I could see. But he’s damned fond of me, in spite of his ragging. At school he used to rag me all the time. He can’t get out of the habit, can’t old Ned. And he was so much better than I was at games, more especially footer, that I can never help looking up to him, as if he could still kick a ball twice as far as I could. He really was a marvellous threequarter and pretty useful in the scrum, too. He’s quite heavy.

THOUGHT NINETEEN

THERE CAN BE NO 'RED
NAPOLEONS'

(Ned and Launcelot dine together. They discuss the Rights of Minorities—*other peoples'* Minorities *bien entendu*: they touch upon the Irish question and the soundness of our Police Force, and the possibility of a 'Red Napoleon'.)

THERE CAN BE NO 'RED NAPOLEONS'

DINNER passed off as well as could be expected, for we were both tired with our Thinking Aloud. But peckish! I only made one or two *faux pas*.

Ned said: 'We still talk about the Rights of Minorities. We pay much lip-service to abstract justice. But it is other people's Minorities we are thinking about.'

'Quite,' I agreed. 'Jews, and the Right Minority in Spain for instance. And Arabs. Are they a Minority? And of course the Irish.'

Ned flashed me rather a nasty look. 'The Irish. Quite!' he said. 'And the wretched Arabs.'

'I'm sorry Ned,' I said, for I saw what I had done. 'I forgot your grandmother was Irish.'

'Not a bit,' he said. 'I never respect your Low German ancestry do I? Or do you attribute my tolerance for Hitler to consideration for you?'

'My ancestors were not Germans,' I said, a little stiffly.

'No, but they were Low Germans. Very low, I should think.'

After this misunderstanding, he took up his tale again. For Ned hates silence.

'Then, we are not such fools, are we, as to suppose that "the Rule of Law" means anything unless it is *also* "the Rule of Force"?'

I had been helping myself to some palatable red jelly to rejuvenate the club mutton, and I answered, a little absent-mindedly:

'Are you referring to the police force, Ned?'

'Of course,' he exclaimed sarcastically. '*The Force*. Of course. We English pose as policemen don't we? Didn't you know?'

'They're a loyal lot of men,' I said dreamily and proudly.

He stared at me.

'Especially young country constables,' I hastened to add. 'One with such a nice open face saluted me as I was getting out of a taxi yesterday.'

'He must have thought you were Hore Belisha,' said Ned.

'Everything in politics comes back to Force, if it doesn't start from it,' he began again, this snag disposed of.

'You are a cynic.' I was chewing my mutton.

'All revolutions are libertarian by definition,' he replied, 'but in the act of successful revolution, the idea of Liberty is invariably transformed into the idea of Force.'

'All revolutionaries are bolshies!' I said, perhaps a little truculently.

'Not all,' said he.

'The whole boiling of them,' said I stoutly.

'But the difference to-day is that the Robespierres are there *at the outset*. Soviet Russia supplies them, by the bushel. Whereas the Social-democrats, who make the Right Wing of the "Popular Fronts", provide the Sieyès, the Barnaves, the Camus.'

'What are they?'

'They are the Liberty-boys. But the Robespierres—the ideologues of Force—are in the saddle from the word go.

Liberty perishes when the first shot is fired. It was only there on sufferance—as a bait to the Pink *bourgeoisie*. A lollypop for lackadaisical Pinks.'

'For Blimps who've taken the wrong turning?'

'Why exactly,' he answered, 'and retired officials of the Zoo, who have grown so accustomed to the howling of the hyenas that when they hear the revolutionary Mob in full cry they think they're back in the Zoo again. And of course *they* will not be torn to pieces, that is understood.'

'I don't see what you mean about the Zoo, Ned. Are the animals Pinks?'

'No Launce. They're Reds. It's their keepers who are apt to go Pink.'

'I see,' I said. Though I'm afraid I was out of my depth, and could not fathom what the Zoo might have to do with the Red Revolution.

'Force is the dominant principle. Revolutions start to-day, where yesterday they used to end. And there are going to be no "Red Napoleons!"'

'Aren't there Ned? I was hoping for a few Napoleons.'

'No, no. None. Soldiers are not respected. All the Napoleons become politicians. If a "Red Napoleon" so much as showed his nose, the Jacobins would kill him, long before he fought his first battle. I doubt if even the Nazis would tolerate a bright young Hindenburg. So all our wars will be not only Civil Wars, but murderous attacks of militant politicians upon each other—backed by armies of technicians—rather than regular campaigns. No more wars of soldiers. No more "gentlemen's wars".'

'Thank God for that!' I exclaimed almost involuntarily.

'The British Navy is about the only *professional* armed force left.'

'I suppose that's true,' said I. 'I always like a sailor.'

'All the nice girls do,' said he. 'They are the only true professionals left, anyway. No air force quite answers that description. There's always something very fishy to me about an "Air Marshal". But an Admiral—he *has* to be a pukka sailor, at least.'

'Oh quite.'

'What?'

'I agreed with you, that an Admiral could not fly,' I muttered, through my mutton.

'No, there'll always be a bit of *To ho ho* about the Senior Service.'

'Thank God for our Navy!' I sighed, with some fervour.

After this little talk we returned to my flat, and there Ned Thought Aloud until he had finished saying what he wanted to say. So my next Thought is just what I took down, on the occasion of our final séance. For Ned says he'll never Think Aloud again, though I think it's jolly decent of him to have done so at all. I mean, to have joined me in Thinking Aloud, in the way that he has.

THE GREAT POLITICAL 'TRUST' THAT IS SUMMONING HITLER TO 'COLLABORATE'

(Ned Thinks Aloud as before and Launcelot takes it down.—'Woolworths is Collectivism in practice,' Ned declares; and all political Collectivism is on the Woolworth or Lyons pattern. The great political 'Trust' that is summoning Hitler to 'collaborate' (the League Trust to which England belongs) is preparing for war: the alternative to 'collaboration', should these recalcitrant nationalist States refuse to enter the International Combine, and merge their identities in the one great super-state of the Financier.)

THOUGHT TWENTY

THE GREAT POLITICAL 'TRUST'
THAT IS SUMMONING HITLER
TO 'COLLABORATE'

NED sat opposite to me. He closed his eyes, folded his hands, as if he'd been a medium, and boomed out his Thoughts to me, but all slowed down in order to keep in step with my pen. Rather a scratchy one, as it happened.

NED THINKING ALOUD

'Never allow yourself, sir or madam, to be taken in by any of these slick phrases, "Collective Security", or "Indivisible Peace", or what not. Keep your eye fixed upon Woolworths. That is my advice to you. There you have the key! To understand politics, you must forget politics. When people talk "collectivist" politics, think of Woolworths. Let that be your compass, sir or madam, upon these treacherous seas.

'Woolworths is Collectivism (or communism) in practice. But imagine *nothing* but Woolworth's!—instead of merely one big cheap store in every district. That is what all "collectivism"—whether it be that of Baldwin or of Pollitt—asks you, ultimately, to sanction and applaud.

'Another great war is blowing up, as I suppose any

fool can see. To understand its meaning (for it *has* a meaning all right, however meaningless it may at first sight appear) fix your mind upon this tendency to coalesce into corporations, to fuse into one vast monopolistic mass.

"That is what the nations are doing, just as much as shops and factories. And those who decline to *coalesce*, are now being threatened by those who are the leading members of this great political *Trust*."

"When Herr Hitler is incessantly commanded to "collaborate", by Great Britain and France, that is what is meant. Yet he stands out. And Italy as well. Likewise Japan. These great states *will not* consent to submerge themselves in this political trustification, which we desire to impose on them. So we shall fight them, sir. By God we shall! I do assure you, they will not consent. That is why—unless Great Britain drops this policy of coercion—there *must* be war."

"Do not permit yourself, oh my fellow-citizen, to be duped by this word "collaborate". It means *submit*. It is a demand to Germany (with menaces) to merge in a super-state."

"But turn back again from the political scene, and scrutinize once more the domestic scene. However inexperienced you may be politically, there is nothing in the Foreign Policy of the British Government, no matter how obscure it may seem, that cannot be decoded immediately by referring to the Chain-Store, or to Lyons the Universal Caterers."

"These "sovereign states" we call Germany, Spain, Poland, Italy, Japan, are relatively small, independent businesses. Think of them as businesses. Incidentally they are businesses who have defied the big Credit Institutions

—or International Banks—upon whose accommodation such businesses are supposed to depend for their continued existence. And it is not *us*, the People of England, but the International Banking Interests (of whom all democratic governments are the agents) who loudly and threateningly demand their *return* into the economic fold. And "Soviets Limited" shouts for it too, now openly at our side.

"These relatively small businesses—which "sentimentalists" still insist upon calling by the old-fashioned name of "nation"—do not desire to surrender their natural identity, and to enter the World Trust, either of a "League of Nations", or of "Soviets Limited".

"There you have, sir or madam, the whole matter in a nutshell."

At this point I put down my pen, and rose to my feet.

"Ned," I said, "that's a big Thought! I'm going to have a break here if you don't mind, while I take that in."

"By all means," said Ned, grinning. But I could see that he was pleased.

We both took one of the fruitiest of my cheroots, which we sat smoking in silence, while I thought about 'Soviets Limited', and Woolworths, and 'Indivisible Peace', my trusty old clock ticking heavily not a foot away from my head.

SOVIETS LIMITED

(Ned terminates his spell of Loud Thinking, by an appeal to the Housewife. He explains Collective Security and Indivisible Peace on the analogy of Lyons. These things are merely a portentous instance of the pressure brought to bear by the Monopolist. It is a case of the Chain-store against the small man or *kulak*.—Soviets Limited, and by their side the large cosmopolitan empire to which we belong, are putting the screw on the less rich states—the ‘Have-nots’—to force them to sell out and *merge*. We use the old-fashioned political terminology—that of ‘alliance’, ‘*entente*’, or ‘pact’. But in reality the issue lies between a mighty Trust, of interlocking syndicates (the Russian, French, and British ‘empires’) on the one side, and the *individualist* states, such as Germany and Italy, on the other.—Ned ends by pointing out how difficult it is for the patriotic Englishman to know what to do or think—seeing that he is asked to put his patriotism at the service of Internationalist politics.)

THOUGHT TWENTY-ONE

SOVIETS LIMITED

'Come on lazybones!' at last Ned shouted. 'I am about to Think Aloud. I'll finish this to-night, if I bust you in the process.'

Seizing my pen, I cried:

'I'm your man, Ned! I feel a light breaking somewhere. I have a little tickling. It must be *truth*. That parasite, *truth*. So fire away. Your penman's ready.'

NED THINKING ALOUD

If you are a housewife, look out of your window. You will see the explanation of world-politics a little beyond your doorstep. No need to rack your brains to discover what all these diplomatic moves, and countermoves, may mean. You have the explanation in your everyday life.

England, during a quarter of a century, has witnessed a great revolution, in economic and social life. First of all, we have seen the elimination of the small individualist trader and the establishment of monster Monopolies. This process is said to be 'inevitable'. But it equally inevitably results, and must result more and more, in a deterioration of the quality of what is supplied. That is generally admitted. But, it is said, there is no help for it. It is the price men pay for 'progress'.

You get your 'essential services' from Public Utility

Companies almost indistinguishable from departments of State. Also you get your milk from the United Dairy Company, not from a Welshman as formerly, running a small retail shop. You would be surprised if you knew how much of your butcher's meat is supplied by a syndicate. The small individual trader, whom you believe you are dealing with, is as often as not the employee of a combine. And Messrs. Lyons have made us familiar with the same phenomenon in the teashop and restaurant trade. It is therefore within the competence of every housewife to observe how Monopolism works.

Now it is only natural that in the political field the same tendencies should be reflected. Politicians like Mr. Baldwin *more than ever* have the look of 'sturdy individualists', standing up for us all against 'the other fellow', whoever he may be. And every shallow demagogue promises us the protection of his bluff honesty against exploitation. How often they have betrayed us!

These politicians are themselves just unimportant individuals like ourselves. Ultimately they have no more power than a flea. And they have for a long time recognized this to be the case. For they are not such fools as they look.

They have, by the pressure of events, by constant experience, learnt their lesson. They are perfectly honest men, at least they are as honest as most of us. That's not saying much, you mutter? Well, let him throw the first stone who is quite sure he is more honest than Mr. Baldwin, that is all I can say. (Though Mr. Baldwin's honesty is above the average, it might even be described as abnormal.)

Most of the politicians at present performing for our benefit at Westminster started as 'rugged individualists'.

But very few of them by this time but have had all that nonsense knocked out of them. From habit they *look*, and outwardly behave, as terribly rugged, downright, and self-willed fellows. But that is just for fun, and so that we should all 'keep smiling', and feel we are in the hands of a good kind political uncle who will look after us. For they are rather political uncles than statesmen.

Most of these men have been won over to the theory of Monopoly. Of political Monopoly. They agree—they can do nothing else—with Litvinov, that arch-monopolist, for instance, that 'Peace is Indivisible'.

You may not have heard it, if you don't follow politics. But you will hear a good deal about this expression once the war starts.

'Peace is indivisible.'

But that is, it is perfectly clear, merely a way of saying that *everything* is Indivisible. War is Indivisible too. (For by 'Peace' Litvinov just means war. He means: 'If you don't obey us, if you cause us to make war on you, then *all* nations will be at war. No nation can stand out.'))

It is the Lyons teashop principle applied to the world of politics. Nations, even big nations, must politically *sell out* and be absorbed by this big combine at Geneva, or perish. And that is why Mr. Attlee, in his speech in Paris, said that nations must abandon the notion of 'the Sovereign State'. If they will not abandon it voluntarily, they must be compelled to do so by armed force. This is what is meant by a 'contribution to Peace'. That they should abandon it *voluntarily*.

What is this notion of National Sovereignty, as seen from the standpoint of the Monopolist? It is a challenge to the all-powerful world-corporation he has in view, and

which is actually in process of formation. It makes him see red. Literally.

When Mr. Litvinov (representing the great Russian Empire, stretching from the Baltic to Korea) threatens Germany or Italy; or when Mr. Eden (representing the British Empire, which sprawls all over the world) does the same, it is as if a representative of Lyons teashops had dropped in to warn the proprietor of one of those little cafés that a Lyons was going to be run up next door to him, which would put him out of business. That, alternatively, and as a generous concession, Lyons would take over his business, and it would be only common sense if he consented to this deal. Else——! (I am not saying that Messrs. Lyons *do* anything of this sort. But it is in effect what all Monopoly implies.)

When Mr. Neville Chamberlain says:

‘As the leader and spokesman of one of the most powerful and influential nations in Europe, he (Hitler) has got it in his power to make an invaluable contribution to etc. etc. etc.’ he is merely saying: ‘The peace-loving nations are more heavily armed than you are, Herr Hitler, and have at their back unlimited resources, and they will unquestionably make war on you, if you do not submit to their will, and if you persist in going on with this Sovereign State stuff. And as *we* are peace-loving as well, we shall probably go to war with you too. Now how about this *invaluable contribution to Peace* Mr. Hitler?’

What Herr Hitler is required to do, as I have said, is to merge Germany in the League of Monopolist States, and it would of course follow that he would then have no need for an army at all. For there is no point in having *any* army if you are not to be allowed to have what is adequate for self-defence. If you abandon the conception of

National Sovereignty, then the idea of Self-defence, too, becomes a thing of the past. That is self-evident.

If you belong no longer to yourself, but to *Everybody*, then clearly nobody would have anything to gain by attacking and invading you. You would be theirs to all intents and purposes, without their going to that trouble. As a province of the International, you would be safe from everything *except* the International. And as to that, rebellion would be useless.

Among the Monopolist States, Great Britain, France, and Russia are the great protagonists. The three greatest empires in the world. These three empires are now trustified, made into a mighty Trust of interlocking syndicates. That is what the Franco-Soviet Pact, and the Franco-British Alliance means.

That is merely an old-fashioned, political, way of putting it, to call these ‘Pacts’ and ‘Alliances’. It is ‘nationalist’ language. It has to be used by Messrs. Eden, Baldwin, or Blum, because of course the majority of people are still ‘nationalist’ minded.

In the background is the United States of America, the most powerful single State in the world. And Mr. Roosevelt, as I have remarked, is an arch-monopolist. So far as he is concerned, he sees eye to eye with the three great syndicated empires. He would send battleships into a League War to-morrow, if he could. He is as much ‘a League of Nations man’ as was President Wilson. He is a confirmed Internationalist.

But President Roosevelt has not such an easy hand to play as Stalin, ruling a chain of semi-asiatic, or asiatic, republics; or as Baldwin, or Blum. The two latter gentlemen know that they can make war as easily as they can light a cigarette. President Roosevelt would have more

difficulty. With that seven thousand million pounds of debt on his back he is doing a tight-rope trick that war might upset, and the audience might smash up the theatre if he began firing at them. But, leaving that aside he and his advisers are heart and soul in the world-monopoly racket.

I can now return to the statement with which I started. Whatever ornamental words you may employ, such as 'democracy', 'freedom', etc., the real principles involved are those of Monopoly, and Anti-Monopoly. We, that is Great Britain, are in with the Monopolists: the adherents of 'Indivisibility'. Over against us are a lot of States which represent relatively small-scale Capital. 'Creative Capital', as Herr Feder would call it.

We stand for the Big Combine. They represent the little individualist business, as it were, now in armed revolt against the insolent tyranny of the Empire Trusts, which are merging into one Empire.

In the Abyssinian War the Italian soldiers asserted that the war they were engaged in was a 'proletarian war'. By this they meant they were really fighting for *themselves*—in their capacity of small proprietors and tradesmen. Those slave-driving semitic overlords, of whom Haile Selassie was the chief, did very little with Abyssinia. They, the workmen of Italy, would put all this land to better and more civilized uses.

Italy has been named 'the great Proletarian.' Same meaning. A country of a host of small interests, rather than one Big Interest.

But you will say the Russians are 'proletarians' too. No, not in this living sense, because they are all the employees of the State. Even the peasants are that. They

do not work for themselves. They are looked at askance if they show any tendency to possess more than one cow, or indeed to possess (apart from the State) anything.

But if you work for the State, or for a great Corporation, it is all one, as far as *you* are concerned.

You are a wage-slave and can never be anything else. Hence 'proletarian'. Hence 'class-conscious': conscious, that is, of belonging to the great herd of wage-slaves. In order to remain beautifully 'class-conscious' you have to remain poor. That is elementary. The only difference is that if you work for *Soviets Limited*, first you don't get as much money: *secondly*, there is only *one* Corporation, so you can't change your employer, or better yourself: and *thirdly* if you *strike* you are shot.

The last four years has made it clear to any intelligent man, who may before have been puzzled and unable to make up his mind, that 'Soviet Communism' is just a monopolist variation on 'Dollar Diplomacy', or the 'British Hegemony'; only with a lot of crude salvationism thrown in. It is *Soviets Limited* with a Propaganda Department as big as all the other departments of State put together. Aiméemacphersonesque personnel, run on Salvation Army lines, attains five or six figures. It is the most stupendous racket the world has ever seen.

In conclusion, let me turn again to war. Our Government publicly bickers with the governments of the so-called 'Fascist' States. No week passes but what there are passages of arms, confined as yet to words and menaces. But one fine day, if this continues, a blow will be struck. This bloodless riot cannot be prolonged indefinitely,

without someone striking out. Then we shall be once more *at war*.

Since the world began there has been a struggle between the Rich and the Poor. Well, whatever else may be in doubt, we now know that at least we and our French and Soviet Allies stand for the Rich.

We are the 'Haves'. The other lot are the 'Have-nots'.

At first sight this would seem, from a purely worldly standpoint, highly satisfactory. If we look at it closer, however, it gets to look a little less so. For the odd thing is that the richer Great Britain gets, the poorer *we* appear to be. And it is the same in France. What is more, this applies not only to the 'proletariat' of mechanics and small merchants, but to anybody, whether he be a clubman or a street-hawker.

It looks almost as if, in the end, we should all be *proletarianized*, does it not, upon the Russian model; without any revolution being required to effect this end. It is only a matter of time.

So to those who see the full significance of what is happening to all without distinction, this is the cardinal novelty. Namely, that what is happening is happening to *all of us*. For the first time in the history of England the clubman's interests are identical with the street-hawkers'. The power that has us under observation, and is treating *one* of us in this way, is treating, or will treat (without compunction, without 'patriotism', and without the appeal of the old school tie being able to function) *all* after the same fashion.

The following rather odd situation thereby arises. We see 'our country', or what is still supposed to be that, abandoning its (or *our*) Sovereign Rights as a nation, and (without consulting us) amalgamating with other nations.

And we see such countries as Germany and Italy standing up for *our* rights (since to stand up for the principle of the Sovereign State is to stand up for us) against our country, 'Great Britain' (which is no longer *our* country, or indeed in the strictest sense a country at all according to Internationalist principles).

As Englishmen we can only find this situation painful and perplexing. For if we are what was called in the bad old days 'patriots', there is nothing any longer to be patriotic about.

We see *our own* house falling into decay. We ask if we may not do something about these misery spots and 'distressed areas'. We are told: 'No. It is your duty *first* to attend to the members of the International Brigade at Madrid.' Or to the financing of Jewish 'refugee' students; or the famine-stricken populations of Russia. And when we say we *want* to do that, but we want first of all to attend to our own people, we are scornfully told that we are 'Fascists'. We still, that is obvious, cling to the old 'individualist' notion of the Sovereign State!

That this is confusing, to say the least of it, it is not necessary to point out. And now on top of it all we are informed that we ought to prepare to get ourselves killed in a terrible war (or stay at home and be gassed), because Herr Hitler *will* not promise to stop making synthetic rubber and petrol for his own use instead of borrowing money from us to buy ours: also refusing to sanction the teaching of the Communist blood-bath, and to make 'pacts' with what he persists in regarding as a particularly nasty and dangerous type of cut-throat.

The position is indeed a peculiarly difficult one for any Englishman, emancipated from the sanctimonious drone

about Democracy, and able to appraise the Hitler bugaboo at its proper worth.

He recognizes that Mr. Baldwin, at present the leader of the nation, has in effect renounced Nationalism, or the principles of patriotism, in embracing Internationalism—though affecting, still, to be the bluff and typical patriot. He is sure that the interests of England—regarded as a Sovereign State—are diametrically opposed to the internationalist politics of Mr. Baldwin. He feels certain that the war that is so much talked of, and for which the British Government appears to be preparing us, will be waged by the British Government *against* the best interests of England; and whatever its outcome, it must lead to the weakening and final extinction of England as an independent national unit, or a 'Sovereign State'.

A difficult position for a patriot, if ever there was one! For if this war ended in the extinction of all nations, as independent polities, would it not be better for those countries to succeed who would be fighting to retain their *own* independence, and so finally that of other nations?

So this greatly perplexed Englishman would be following in his leaders' footsteps, but the opposite way to Mr. Baldwin. The Internationalism that causes *Mr. Baldwin* to be unpatriotic would lead *him* to be unpatriotic, too. For *in the abstract* it would be better for those nations to triumph who upheld the principle of national independence, than those who upheld the principles of national subservience to an 'Indivisible' conception of a cosmopolitan super-state. Yet it would be unpatriotic for him to desire their triumph, because England was at war with them (at war with them in a determined effort to destroy patriotism for ever and so *England* for ever).

Here is the terrible dilemma in which the Englishman, consciously or unconsciously, is placed to-day. It is a 'great turning point in the world's history', he is told. Everything depends on England. 'We are convinced that world-peace can yet be saved by an Anglo-German settlement, which would do more than anything else to promote other understandings; and that world-peace can be saved by nothing else.' (Mr. Garvin). Yet that settlement is impossible, because the British Government lays down, in unfriendly and unaccommodating manner, as if addressing a malefactor, impossible conditions, insisting that Germany should agree to remain inadequately armed, in face of the Franco-Soviet Pact.

Usually wars have been prepared in secret, and blow up very suddenly, when the time comes. But we have all had time to think about this one, and to examine the issue from every imaginable angle. With a sanctimonious fatalism the British Government await the collision. But there is no conceivable reason that it should ever occur, that any of us can see. Theoretically most wars have held forth to one side or the other hope of gain. Nothing can be gained by this one. Only loss. As a war-in-the-making it is the most senseless-looking war that man can ever have gazed upon. And we shall be cursed by our own people, eventually, for making it.

And yet, England being no longer a democracy, we can do nothing to avert it. If there is a debate in the House of Commons, no one is allowed to speak except a handful of Ministers and ex-Ministers: those, namely, who have embraced the policy that must, it seems, lead to war. That, gentlemen, is the situation. I think I have said all that it is possible to say.

SOVIETS LIMITED

I threw down my pen and sprang to my feet as Ned stopped.

'If what you say is true, Ned, it is our duty to take some action. I mean to say, we should sign a petition.'

'Who to?'

'Who to? To the Prime Minister.'

'But it is the policy of the Prime Minister I have been talking about.'

THOUGHT TWENTY-TWO

PACIFISM LIMITED

(Launcelot is very depressed about Woolworths. Ned, in the course of his talk about Chain-stores, has filled his friend's mind with doubt regarding Freedom. He asks Ned if there will always be orchids and muscadet. He then goes home and turns to the day's news, where he finds an interview with Mr. Peach. That is, the author of 'Patriotism Limited'.—'B.B.C. Cancels Armaments Comedy' is the heading.)

PACIFISM LIMITED

AFTER Ned's all-day Think I had a kind of grim feeling, which I traced to the one word *Woolworth*. Coming in over and over again, as it did, it had a most depressing effect on me.

The League of Nations is such a posh show, with its million-pound palace on the shores of Lake Geneva—Mr. Eden's trousers are so beautifully, so reassuringly, creased—it all is so pleasantly opulent, that it *is* rather grim to have to substitute for that image of a millionaire's parliament the image of a Woolworth Store, a sixpenny bazaar.

When I next saw Ned I put this to him.

'Have I shattered another illusion?' he asked me, sort of kindly.

'Well, Ned,' I said, 'if Liberty really only means Woolworths!'

'That's what it does boil down to, Launce. You can't have more than sixpenn'orth of Liberty. Human nature won't run to more than that. We're a squalid lot.'

'But must there be no more Rolls Royces?' I asked in desperation. 'I mean to say—what do you call it? Symbolically. You know what I mean.'

'Oh yes, there'll always be Rolls Royces, Launce,' he said very considerably, I thought. 'But they will only be

for the Woolworth Management—or the Marks and Spencer board of directors. I mean the *political* Woolworths, and so on, don't you know?

'And there *will* still be caviare, druggets, and *muscadet*—orchids, asparagus, and ostrich feathers?'

I laughed, and he laughed too. 'You can't stop orchids from growing, Launce, nor caviare from forming in the innards of the sturgeon, can you?'

'Hardly,' said I.

'As to druggets!' he said, with less confidence.

'Oh well, I think I might just manage to survive without a drugget,' I laughed. 'But shall I be on the Board of Directors . . .?'

I made this enquiry with some diffidence, for it was like asking if I might be an M.P.

Ned seemed to go a bit sad at this question, however. He looked worried.

'I shouldn't have said so, Launce,' he replied at last—reluctantly, I thought. 'You're not quite sharp enough. No, you will be a *client*.'

'A *client*, Ned? Not . . .!'

'I'm afraid so. Yes. *Soviets Limited*, whatever one may say about it, is not run by fools, exactly. Nor, of course, is it run for fools, either.'

'Who is it run for, Ned?' I asked him eagerly. For he had aroused my curiosity.

'Oh. Very clever people,' he said shortly.

This was all I could get out of him. He talked a little more about Liberty, that was all. He said that the two sorts of 'Liberty', the new and old, the Eastern and Western, were symbolized by the Woolworth Building in New York City, and the Statue of Liberty in New York harbour, respectively. The latter was the old Whig

'Liberty' of England. *Anglo-Saxon Liberty*, he said. Whereas the Woolworth Tower (it is a skyscraper) could properly stand for Liberty as conceived by the Internationalist. The former, he said, was Liberty as understood by Franklin: the latter was Liberty as understood by Franklin Roosevelt. 'The Roosevelt cancels out the Franklin,' he told me.

I listened. Then I said 'Ah.' He smiled.

'I don't think much of either,' he added quickly. 'But one is liberty. Whereas the other isn't.'

'Which is liberty?' I asked.

'Oh, the lady with the torch,' he said.

When I got home after my conversation with Ned, I turned to the day's news. A miscellaneous bag. I had several days arrears to make up. This is Sunday. I don't know if February gets one day more or not. If it doesn't, to-morrow's March. I turned first to the latest B.B.C. disturbance. About 'Patriotism, Limited.'

This was a play, all about making arms and getting rich by selling poison gas. The B.B.C. thought it was just the thing for them. Easy to understand. Made it plain that the B.B.C. had nothing to do with war. That *their* poison gases were respectable and only poisoned the *mind*, and as most people hadn't got much, it really made no odds!

But what happened? A lot of M.P.s, who had been debauched by Franco and Hitler, suddenly began attack—the B.B.C. in Parliament (most unexpectedly, for none of them had opened their mouths for months on end) saying that the B.B.C. was Pink and had a down on Franco and Hitler, but a soft place in their heart for Stalin and Moses Rosenberg. This was while the B.B.C. were meditating a little Left Wing treat for broadminded

listeners with 'Patriotism, Limited.' They were in a bit of a quandary. But counsels of prudence prevailed. They decided *not* to broadcast 'Patriotism, Limited' after all. It would look too 'Left Wing'.

When I asked Ned what he thought about the suppression of 'Patriotism, Limited', he shrugged his shoulders.

'It's the stale old stuff, I suppose, of class-war for babes,' he said.

'How do you mean Ned, for babes?'

'Isn't it considerably simplifying the discussion of the causes of war, to say it is mainly the armament manufacturers?'

'I suppose it is,' I said. 'Why one of them called Nobel founded a *Peace Prize* for Sir Norman Angel, didn't he?'

'Perfectly correct. And Sir Norman Angel, by the way, if a war broke out with Hitler to-morrow would be far more guilty than any armament manufacturer. He spends all his time declaiming against wicked Fascists and instilling in the minds of people a dangerous fear of the "Hun". So he would have a much better title to a *War Prize* (if some millionaire Quaker would only endow such a thing) than Vickers would, or the *Comité des Forges*.'

'Is Sir Norman a firebrand?' I asked. 'I thought the fellow was a pacifist.'

Ned laughed; I thought a little bitterly. 'Sir Norman, as you call him, is described as that. That's the joke. One of life's little paradoxes.'

'Oh, I see.'

'But go and write a play,' exclaimed Ned, a little fiercely, 'entitled *Pacifism, Limited*. Write a microphone drama showing how war is not *solely* the outcome of the machinations of the manufacturers of cannon: that there

are *other* machinations, some by no means obvious, which even require a little intelligence on the part of the observer to spy out—showing that cash is not the unique incentive to war-mongering—that Power plays its part. Having written your play, go and ask the B.B.C. to broadcast it and see what they say!

'But my name is not . . .'

'Not a famous one? It would be the same if it were! *They* think of other things besides mere money, too.'

'But what would they say, Ned, to my play, if I were an awfully well-known feller?'

'They would return it to you, Launce.'

'But *why* would they return it to me Ned? I don't see. If it were a good play.'

Ned laughed with good-natured scorn. He has been extremely good-natured of late, I don't know why.

'They would probably say, my dear Launcelot, that it was over the heads of the majority of listeners-in.'

'And I expect it would be,' I retorted, 'if it proposed to give a prize for war-mongering to a pacifist, who had got a peace prize from an armament king for hating war!'

'Yes,' replied Ned, 'especially if you add that many pacifists are in favour of Class-war—that is why they are "pacifists": and that Class-war is the Sport of Money Kings as well and truly (or it *can* be) as war *tout court* was the "Sport of Kings".'

'And that conservative statesmen,' I added, slyly, 'are the creatures sometimes of the *former* kings. And sometimes the *latter* kings are the greatest obstacles in the way of the war-monger!'

'Or *could* be, if too popular,' corrected Ned, entering into the spirit of my sly fun. 'And therefore run the danger of being bumped off, or given their passports!'

This was a grand game; but I could think of nothing to cap that last one with. I had got to know Ned's mind so well by this time that up to a point I could forestall him. Almost take the words out of his beastly mouth. And—up to a point—I was beginning to think like him, too. Just now and then I found myself thinking like Ned thinks.

As usual, the *Manchester Guardian* had the best bit about 'Patriotism, Limited'. The headlines were as follows:

B.B.C. CANCELS ARMAMENTS COMEDY

Author suggests fear of "Colonel Blimp"

Colonel Blimp once more! 'Fear,' indeed, of Colonel Blimp! Mr. Peach had the same exaggerated opinion of my old friend as has Mr. Low. For Peach (*du Garde Peach* too) was the rather surprising name of the author of the play, and he had said in an interview:

'I dare say, if my play was performed, all the Colonel Blimps in the country would write to the B.B.C. to protest, and the B.B.C. does not like having protests from Colonel Blimps.'

The thought that if another war came (to 'make the world safe for communism', this time) my old friend Colonel Blimp would be blamed for it by all the Peaches—and by Sir Norman probably as well, unless the Franco-Soviet, *our* side, *lost*—made me laugh quite uproariously. As well blame a battery-cook for losing a battle, as blame a mere soldier for making a war. And it *is* so important who the people *are* who are responsible

for these senseless bloodlettings! It was Ned who was speaking then. Or rather that is what Ned would have said. I said it for him. I often find myself doing that now.

THOUGHT TWENTY-THREE

WAR MAY END IN FASCIST
TERROR

(Launcelot reveals the cause of his great anxiety about the next war. It might, he believes, end in a Fascist Terror. That means *castor oil*! He decides to look at no more cartoons by Mr. Low, as they give him horrible nightmares, in which he is chased by Mosley and Mussolini. He quotes from three reports of utterances by Cripps, Lloyd George, and Ian Hamilton respectively. He likes Cripps's, because Cripps says he would go to war with both Mosley and Hitler if they came too much of their nonsense, and would gladly vote armaments if he thought the Government felt the same way that he did about it.)

WAR MAY END IN FASCIST TERROR

THIS Thought is all about War. It is really past a joke this war business. I've thought aloud about it all the way back from my club.

There's something wrong with it somewhere. But I can't put my finger on the spot. I don't mean the Spanish civil war, but the war *we* are getting ready for. Our war-to-be, with Britain in the centre of the picture.

I can't get to the bottom of the Spanish business. Not absolutely. There's something that eludes me. But that is as clear as crystal compared with this war *we* are arming to fight.

Of course, I can see we have to kill Hitler. Or somebody has to. If the French and Russians can't do it alone we have to help them. Or I suppose so.

Look what he's done. (1) He's muzzled the Press. Monstrous! (2) He sentences Bolshies to death. Barbarous! (3) He prevents Jews from making money. Cruel, I call it! (4) He's apt to seize Danzig, an awfully pretty city on the Baltic. Abominable! We just can't stand for all this.

But couldn't we do it without another war? Couldn't we get him over here on some pretext, and kill him? I mean like King Alexander of Czechoslovakia, who was shot in Marseilles. Pay some Bolshie—or just promise

him a free pardon and perhaps a peerage. We'd say we were awfully sorry but couldn't help it.

What worries me most about the war is not the killing. I'm forty-three, and have got asthma and flat feet. What worries me about it is that it's liable to end in Fascism. Infernally liable! Some optimists say *in Communism*. What 'opes! All the Blimps will be out in their uniforms and Boer War ribbons. Before you can say knife they will have popped Hore Belisha in a Concentration Camp, and will be storming up and down Piccadilly shouting for *more colonies* and sticking their arms out in the Fascist salute!

I know I shall go mad if this goes on much longer. I've had the most diabolically unpleasant dreams of late. I shall end, I know, I feel it in my bones, with Sir Oswald Mosley's knee on my chest yet. The thug! How I hate that man—and he a baronet too. And probably I shall have Hitler's thumbs on my windpipe, while Mussolini pours castor oil down my throat.

I mustn't look at any more of Low's cartoons, that's a fact. Of course I know they're only jokes. But they do put the wind up me I must confess, and Mussolini with that unshaven chin and staring eyes of his as Low draws him chases me in my sleep till I just *shriek* out and wake myself up, bathed in sweat. These nightmares unnerve me.

But I don't mind admitting that I'm *terrified* of Mosley—he's here in our midst! I think he's capable of anything, the bloodthirsty impostor. I wish we could go to war with *him*. I'm sure Pritt and Cripps and Gallacher would: Hitler and Mosley at the same time.

It was bad enough when he was a Bolshie. I felt then the country was going to the dogs, with baronets in red ties. But now he's far worse. If the Tsar were here he'd

probably give his Imperial Majesty castor oil, and I dare say a bottle of cascara for the Tsarevitch. Far worse than death. Ekaterinburg would be child's play to it. Why, Sir Oswald's the sort of man I wouldn't leave alone in a village druggist's. As likely as not he'd make a clean sweep of all the aperients he could lay his hands on and constipate the entire village.

Ned laughs at what he calls my *paregoric fancies*. He's all right. He has the constitution of an ox. He'd swallow a pint of cod liver oil without turning a hair. But it's a different matter with me. I'm not so robust as he is—never was. At school I fainted once at the sight of a cane. (People are such brutes—we call ourselves civilized!) And now I have to face up to castor oil in the middle distance, under a Fascist Terror—give me the *hot pogrom* every time. These new 'cold pogroms' without a drop of bloodshed get me down. Oh for a spot of blood, what! Why it's like cutting a man in the street. That's worse than cutting him with a knife like a straightforward assassin.

*Blow, blow thou winter wind
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.*

As Shylock says in the *Merry Wives*.

I can't pass a chemist's shop without a bit of a shudder. Gets on one's nerves. Why, I passed a shop the other day and it made me stop dead, what I saw. Actually they were advertising castor oil in their window in great red letters. It made me feel quite sick! I suppose a Fascist chemist—the unspeakable thug!

That is what war means to me. This precious war in the making. However!

Here are three cuttings out of papers all of the last day of February, and all about the war. Not a word about castor oil in any of them. Only about death, shell-shock, blindness, and economic ruin. As if castor oil wasn't at the bottom of the whole thing. I mean to say, apart from what may happen *afterwards*, why we are going to war at all is in the first instance about castor oil. If that thug Hitler hadn't administered castor oil to Jews and Bolshies we shouldn't be all talking about war and arming to the teeth, should we? It's a humanitarian war if ever there was one.

Lots of people say that wars are often about oil. Abyssinia for instance. You remember Ricketts? *That* was supposed by some some people to be an 'Oil War'.

Well, the next great war will be a *Castor Oil War*.

Men have fought for Beauty (Helen of Troy, whose face launched a thousand ships); they have fought for Honour; for the Wealth of the Indies. But we are going to be much more original. We are going to war about Nothing, except a dose of castor oil. For the people we are going to war with have no money, no colonies; nothing to take. It's a new sort of war altogether.

In future times I dare say people will laugh at us a little. But all I can say is: let them try a dose of castor oil, or see what it feels like to be frogmarched! We may have nothing *to gain* by this war. But we should certainly all be forced to swallow castor oil if we *didn't* go to war. It's what is called 'a preventive war'. Justly so named, say I!

Oh, the three cuttings out of the newspapers. Cripps, Lloyd George, and Sir Ian Hamilton, all expressing opinions about the next war.

Sir Stafford Cripps says he is all for it, if the death of

millions will only help the Soviet and not do the other thing. Sir Ian Hamilton says if you 'win' or 'lose' a war in 1937 you *lose* it really. Therefore, all war is bad. Mr. Lloyd George says we're drifting dreamily into war, on a wave of artificial prosperity, induced by armament orders. He's all against war. One *for* (on conditions) and two *against*, therefore. Oh dear. The only one that's for it is a Bolshie. What, oh what, is my Leader really doing? I often ask myself.

Here is what they say, anyhow:

'SIR S. CRIPPS: "I AM NO PACIFIST"

THE THREAT OF FASCISM

"I am no pacifist," said Sir Stafford Cripps at the East Dorset Labour Party supper at Poole last night.

"I am prepared, under proper auspices, to defend this country against Fascism from outside and inside.

"You may ask what I would do in the face of the menace of Fascism from Germany, Italy and Spain. I would see to it that armaments were in the care of a Government which I knew to be opposed to Fascism, but that certainly cannot be said of the National Government to-day.

"There is every sign that the group in the Cabinet which has always been favourable to Hitler is getting its way. There is no security that these armaments will not be used in alliance with Hitler against Russia and other democratic countries."

It's extraordinary how mistaken we were about the Russians. We used to think they were Bolshies. Now of course we know they were democrats, just like us. It's extraordinary how mistaken we can be in people.

Sir Stafford would arm—he doesn't mind the two thousand millions to be spent a bit, he knows it's necessary. Then, when he was ready, he would kill all the Fascists 'outside and inside' the country. He says our Government won't do that. But Ned says they *are* going to do what Sir Stafford says they ought to. I only hope he's right.

Next comes Sir Ian Hamilton. He doesn't want to kill *anybody*. He agrees that, seeing he's a soldier, this is a little odd.

' "I AM HAPPY IN A WAR"

—Sir Ian Hamilton

'Scrapping of "peace preparations" that are really war plans and a real effort to bring about a world armistice.

'That is what General Sir Ian Hamilton appealed for in a speech at Newcastle last night.

'Confessing that he was "one of those queer creatures who is happy during war," Sir Ian said:

' "Some folk may wonder that I, of all people, should speak of peace. I am no pacifist, but I have to think of old comrades—of the bravest of the brave, the Royal Naval Division, with Antwerp and the Dardanelles to their credit, of the Old South African War veterans and the British Legion.

' "*You still go under.*

' "If there was a spark of decency in the world they'd let us die off before they start on this grand campaign, for which greater preparations are being made than at any time for any war since the days of Darius.

' "*War in the old days was not wrapped up in cotton wool, whereby preparations for war were called preparations for peace.*

' "Nowadays, whether you win or lose, equally you go under.

' "Even if you escape shell-shock, blindness, poison gas, you go limping along for the rest of your days with a millstone round your necks."

'Sir Ian was speaking at the annual dinner of the Northern branch of the Royal Naval Division.'

The 'millstone round your neck' is of course the money you have to pay back to the gents who have supplied you with the sinews of war. For instance, the Yankees lent us billions for our last little show, and that is why we are so poor. Then the Jews were awfully good to us, and Lloyd George says we promised them to clear Palestine of the Arabs for them as a reward for their financial accommodation. That's why we have to help them with the Arabs to-day—though of course extremely just, as we always are, and not allowing the Arabs to be pushed out as quickly as the Jews would like. That's *one* of our millstones. Next time we'll only be fighting fascists, who are as poor as church mice. So we shall have a *bigger* millstone next time—added to our other millstones. That's what Sir Ian means. It's a moot point.

Lastly, Mr. Lloyd George. (From the *Sunday Express* I got this.) He harps on the money side of it, too. None of them seem to face up to the castor oil aspect of the question. Except perhaps Sir Stafford. Why he dislikes *the Fascists* so much is, of course, that. He's the nearest to the realities of this painful situation. But here's Lloyd George:

'*And Nobody Protests*

'In Japan there is a Government of undefinable

politics. But all alike are spending the last penny they can scrape together on the weapons of war.

'And they are all doing it with the unquestionable assent of the great majority of the people in their respective countries.'

'Even in a wealthy country like Great Britain, a sudden increase of hundreds of millions in its annual expenditure is an alarming fact. Especially so when the increase goes for purely unproductive operations.

'But when I returned from Jamaica a few days ago I witnessed no symptoms of any popular protest against this wasteful expenditure.

'When I recall the fury of the agitation against an increase which I once prepared of about £20,000,000 a year on old-age pensions and national insurance, I was perplexed at this apathy over a planned increase of £200,000,000 a year.

'There is a genuine protest coming from pacifist organizations. But they represent a minority.

'An Enemy to be Feared'

'Labour has convinced itself that it believes in peace, but it also hates Hitler, and Hitler is arming. . . . Labour is, therefore, not as pacific as it used to be, and attacks on armaments lack passion and conviction. . . .

'But you have a feeling that if Labour came into power to-morrow the programme would not be dropped. . . .

'In France, Blum, the Socialist, and in Russia, Stalin, the Communist, are both building up their armies and their flotillas on the seas and in the air with just the same reckless energy as Hitler. He is the common menace.'

'What is the explanation of the changed attitude of the British public? First of all, the apprehension created

by German rearmament and the Italian menace to our sea communications in the Mediterranean.

'A Sense of Dismay'

' . . . A rich man in a panic about his health will spend any money to regain confidence. So will a rich nation in a fright about its security.

'As to the Navy, the Government had spread the rumours that the reason why they had failed to tackle Japan effectively over Manchuria and Italy over Abyssinia was because our Navy was inadequate to these tasks.

'As far as Italy was concerned, it was a grotesque falsehood. We had an overwhelming naval superiority over Italy. But the Government had to cover up their lamentable diplomatic failure.'

'Hence the impression, deliberately created, that our Navy was not equal to the job. This mendacity will cost the British taxpayer hundreds of millions sterling on the Navy alone.

'There is another reason for the complacency with which all classes in Britain regard this enormous expenditure on arms. It is good for trade.

'It is true that it is good for business only temporarily—but how many people look over five years ahead? £1,500,000,000 spent on the machinery of war quickens almost every industry. Iron and steel, shipbuilding, engineering, coal, building in all its branches, transport—all these trades benefit directly.

'Towards The Rocks'

'For the employers (and they include hundreds of thousands of shareholders), it means increased profits and dividends, and an almost sensational rise in the stock

markets; for the workmen more employment at higher wages.

'The most powerful trade unions will benefit. Their members will be better off; their own funds will increase. Their leaders may still be opposed in principle to bloated armaments, but it will not be so easy to rouse the enthusiasm of their followers, whose households have endured stinted rations in the lean years of depression.

'The European barque is being carried comfortably and speedily by a trade wind towards the rocks of war.'

I like Mr. George (as I for one prefer to call him) coming back from Jamaica and expecting to find England in an uproar about the two thousand million. Doesn't he know the Englishman by this time? He should. Why, if it was ten thousand million instead of two he wouldn't turn a hair. He's not like foreigners. He's not afraid of taxation. It's the English way.

Besides, Germany's two thousand million *sounded* a lot, as Mr. Churchill put it. But if you're arming yourself up from zero quickly, up to the French and Russian scale, or as near as you can get, it costs a bit, and aren't we doing the same? Only because of Germany—not because of Russia and France. A war with *them* is unthinkable. They're democrats, like us.

As to the 'mendacity' Mr. George speaks about, I admire his impudence! That's all I can say.

LAUNCELOT SEES THE LIGHT

(A doctor he has consulted advises Launcelot to abstain from all further absorption of so-called 'news'—to cut himself off from all sources of 'information'. But Launcelot at length discovers the nature of his mistake. He had thought that everything was awfully important. He had misunderstood the nature of human existence. That was all.—He recounts his last two conversations with members of his club. And here his manuscript ends.)

THOUGHT TWENTY-FOUR

LAUNCELOT SEES THE LIGHT

SOMETHING's muscling-in on my innards. Down in the pit of the stomach. From left to right, and back again. This is not a Thought. It's a Pain!

Of course I know perfectly well what it is. It's an imaginary dose of castor oil.

It's been there for a week. I dream it's been administered to me by a great hobnailed bully, a Fascist. And when I wake up the feeling's still there, as if I'd really taken the damned stuff.

I've been to a doctor. He says it's a case of 'referred pain', as he called it. It's sort of reflected, as I understand it, back from the pages of the newspapers. He's forbidden me to read any newspapers until further orders. He says health comes first, news afterwards. He even rather agrees with Ned about the B.B.C. 'Only dance music!' he says. 'Understand! And not too much of that. Why have the beastly thing in your place at all?' he added rudely, noticing that I hesitated.

I have thought nothing aloud for some days. Somehow I don't want to think aloud any more. The last time I tried I had to stop. I found myself saying the most awful things.

What *was* it I said? Oh yes, I found myself writing like this:

'I have been living in a mental home, or a public mad-house, without knowing it,' I thought. 'Naturally the other patients, when they're not in the throes of one of their paroxysms, are very quiet and well behaved. A trifle *over-pompous*. Nothing more! It is my belief, in thinking things over a little, that they are not quite so badly affected as their keepers are, and, if left alone, they would continue perfectly civil—if a shade too grand and impressive.

But their keepers will never let them alone; morning, noon and night they are at them, stirring them up and encouraging them to some irrational outburst. The Governor is reported to have said that they're rather a tame lot, and scarcely worthy of their name of 'homicidal maniacs', and required a bit of gingering up. 'What they want', he said, so rumour has it, 'is a touch of old Ronald True.'

Still, when you ask them, as I have done, *why homicide?* they don't understand you. They can't imagine life without homicide; as one of them put it to me, 'it was the only thing that gave life any meaning'.

When I thought this over, I did not see that life *had* any particular meaning, it is true. But still (once more) *why homicide?* It is pretty plain, though I've got in here somehow or other, that homicide's not my line of country. Yet I shouldn't be here at all if I wasn't a little queer.

What, I wonder, is my particular form of—er—derangement? That is what I ask myself.'

I got so far. Then I stopped. I concluded it must be some awfully attractive aberration, but couldn't give it a name. This hectic search for my particular form of *non compos mentis*, worried me so much I gave it up and stopped Thinking Aloud for the time being.

I can see now where I went wrong. As I write this my stomach is griping grimly, just as it would if I'd been made to swallow a dose of castor oil against my will. My mind is somehow upset, as well, as if a hundred Thoughts were scrapping in it for the mastery. A grim company. The voice of a B.B.C. announcer is intoning—rather nasally, as if hugging a rather intoxicating but naughty thought, to which he is too much of a *sahib* to give utterance—some item of news, say from the seat of war, which is so palpably bogus that even I can see through it.

I can see where I went wrong. *I thought all this was awfully important*. That was my mistake. I really believed it all mattered—oh, as if a great deal hung on it, don't you know. I took my politics too seriously. I forgot *who* they were all about—I mean 'politics'. Now I recognize, I am glad to say, that nothing is of the least importance which can happen in such an existence as this.

It was all the fault, really, of that *pompous manner* I have spoken of, such a marked feature of my . . . my fellow-sufferers. (If I *am* that way too?) What pains they are at decorously to mask the frenzied nonsense that is eating at their intellects. For if there is one thing more than another that they feel they *must* at all cost achieve, it is an air of disarming commonplaceness.

Only listen to their speeches in Parliament, or at the microphone. You will see what I mean. They discuss mass-murder and its problems in matter-of-fact voices, occasionally dropping into a sanctimonious whine or drone, suggestive of the peculiarly *moral* nature of this particular programme of insensate violence they are proposing.

But I see now everything in its proper perspective. How simple it all was really. I cannot understand how

I came to be taken in. It is at present perfectly plain to me that all these 'Communists', and 'Democrats', and 'Fascists', these Popular-fronters and Baldwinians I have been worrying my head about, are so many armed rackets, all equally having for guiding principle the philosophy of Force.

Each says that *the other fellow* is really the arch-culprit, the man of violence. But all are hunting each other, gun in hand. Each calls the other a 'thug', or a 'gangster'. And yet, if any of them were not that, he would soon be blotted out.

The Marx lot say they're out to be the saviours of the 'workers' (for no particular reason—just because they're awfully kind). But when they get the workman in their clutches, they treat him like a galley-slave. Where he knew hunger, before, he knows worse hunger then. As to the 'democrats', they say they're going to kill all the wicked 'fascists', with the help of the Marxists, to make the world safe for Communism, so that we can all be beautifully *free*. But meanwhile they carefully remove all freedom from those institutions still termed 'democratic', in those societies over which they rule as camouflaged dictators. Next, as to the 'fascists', that lot say they are out to rescue their respective countries from the grip of the moneyspider, but they become blackbeetles themselves—ugh!—chasing men everywhere with castor oil and Epsom salts. And lastly, the Popular-fronters, they make themselves popular—it is easy—by promising the moon, and by shouting *Peace!* The people rush out at the word 'Peace', but are met by a Soviet pressgang and before they know where they are they are in the trenches, being 'heroes', just like the Tommy and the Poilu of old. Whichever lot you take up with, you end on a battle-

field. It all ends in violent death, however it begins. Or worse, in castor oil.

I went into my club and sat down beside a man I know slightly and began talking about what was uppermost in my mind. He was very jolly at first, but towards the end stopped smiling. We seemed to hold very different views about everything—though I could swear that the last time I spoke to him this was not the case. He must have changed, or I must.

'I see what you mean,' I said. 'We ought to kill the unemployed in a new show with the Boche; then there wouldn't be any more. To save money. But look what it would cost, a new war!'

'I didn't say that,' he said.

'No, but because Ribbentrop has threatened Baldwin that if he doesn't give him a Pacific island he will attack the Germans in Czechoslovakia, or perhaps illtreat the Ogpu?'

'That is not quite what I said,' he answered, still smiling. He thought I was joking.

'Well, I've been thinking this over,' I told him. 'Pretty carefully. And I can't see why Germany shouldn't have a few islands. They say the natives long to have the Germans back. They didn't exploit them the way we do, apparently.'

My companion snorted.

'I shouldn't object to handing back a few old tropical deserts in Africa, would you?' I asked him, 'if that would *really* save the Ogpu from the clutches of the Gestapo, and make Danzig safe for the Polack and Jewish minority.'

'Not so fast. You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick, haven't you?'

'I don't think so,' I answered. 'I *loathe* a majority rule, don't you? It is so oppressive and un-English. We are in a minority after all, everywhere except in England. Which is of course why we stick up for *ourselves* in the way we do in India and so on. And if we stick up for *ourselves*, the least we can do is to stick up for other people, like the Germans in Czechoslovakia for instance, where *they* are in a minority, and threatened by Hitler.'

At this point the man I was chatting with got up rather quickly from the chair beside me and walked out of the room. I then went over and sat down beside another man. I had a short talk with him.

'This war', I said with a sigh, 'is getting terribly on my nerves. Isn't it on yours?'

'Which war?' he asked, smiling.

'I don't mean the Spanish one,' I said.

'Oh, I thought you might have meant that,' he replied pleasantly. 'It's getting a bit on mine, I confess. I wish the Government would smash those beastly rebels quickly and have done with it.'

'No, I meant the war we're getting ready for against the Fascist Powers, Germany and Italy.'

'That Germany's getting ready for against us, you mean.' He spoke with some asperity.

'Whichever way you like to put it. What does it matter?'

'It matters a great deal!' He was getting snappy.

'The war that everybody's getting ready for with everybody else, shall we say then, to simplify matters.'

'Everybody is getting ready, I agree. But some got ready *first*.'

'You mean France and Russia?'

'No. I *don't* mean France and Russia. I mean Germany, of course.' He was losing his temper, I saw.

'But France and Russia', I objected, 'were armed to the teeth, surely, at a time when Germany had no arms at all?'

'I don't know what you mean. I don't admit that for a moment!' He fixed me with a bloodshot eye that positively *shouted* 'pro-German!'

'Why should we arm against Germany? The Internal Policy of a country is no affair of ours, as Lord Rankeillour said the other day.'

'Lord *who*!' he snapped, very suspicious.

'Lord Rankeillour,' I said mildly—'I mean to say, look here: *they* might threaten, mightn't they, to make war on *us* if we didn't stop persecuting our Catholics in Edinburgh and Belfast, or unless we fed our unemployed properly, reformed our hospital system, with all the hardships it entails for the poor: if we didn't provide more than ten shillings a week for the aged, if we didn't prevent people from gambling with human lives on our Exchanges, if we didn't muzzle our Bishops and stop our Press from fomenting mass-murder. . . .'

At the words 'mass-murder' this second man got up from his chair. His face was flushed, his eyes were bright, and I could see from the way he was looking at me that a homicidal seizure was not far away. I felt none too safe.

'I can see, sir,' he barked out from above me, 'that you will have shortly to visit a specialist. But it seems to me that there is more than a little method in your madness, and I shall make it my business to report to the Secretary of this club what you have just said.'

'It's as you like,' I replied. 'Only we are not at war *yet*.'

'Perhaps not,' he said uncertainly, eyeing me from head to foot before his departure. 'Who said we were?'

'Oh, no one.' I got up quickly. The fellow squared his shoulders, but I said to him very earnestly, attempting to bring him back to reason:

'I know it doesn't matter. It's all nothing really. But this is going to be a really fearful war you know. It's all very well the Archbishop of York saying we shall have to have another war to make the League of Nations a place fit for heroes to live in . . . !'

'I don't in the least know what you're talking about. But at all events, it's no use your talking to me as if I were responsible. . . .'

'We all are . . . we all are. And we have plenty of time to think it over. That's the awful thing. I can see all the dead, each body with its group of mourners. I would like to say to these bereaved and helpless masses now, if I could reach them: *Count your dead!* I would take each one aside and shout: *They are alive!* Can't you see that they are not dead *yet*—though people are preparing to butcher them in millions. For *nothing at all*. In a Great War, all about nothing. But it would make no difference, of course, if I did. No one bothers about *death*. It's odd that you can't rouse them at the threat of death. Are they so tired of life? Or do you think that perhaps it is castor oil they're thinking of all the time, so death is in the nature of an anti-climax, what!'

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